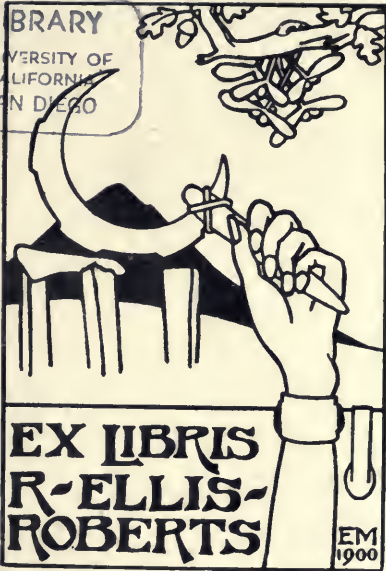


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Companion Poets

P O E M S

BY

GEORGE WITHER

EDITED

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

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LONDON

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Most wretched men
Are cradled into poets by wrong;
They learn in suffering what they lack in song.

CONTENTS

—CXX—

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	7-10
FAIRE VIRTUE, MISTRESS OF PHILA-	
RETE	11-119
A CHRISTMAS CAROL	121-123
A SONNET UPON A STOLEN KISS	124
A BALLAD	125-128
A DREAM	129-131
THE SHEPHERD'S HUNTING	133-182
FROM WITHER'S HYMNS AND SONGS	
OF THE CHURCH:—	
THE TEN COMMANDMENTS	183-184
THE LORD'S PRAYER	185
THE APOSTLES' CREED	186
CHRISTMAS DAY	187
GOOD FRIDAY	188-190





INTRODUCTION



GEORGE WITHER, who lived to a good old age, and Andrew Marvell, were the only poets of mark who, like Milton, were not on the side of the Cavaliers in the great controversy of the time of Charles I. and the Commonwealth. In his younger days, when he wrote "The Shepherd's Hunting" and "Faire Virtue," the pieces contained in this volume, he was full of a free music, that he poured out with a rare freshness of tone and frequent happiness of thought and phrase. As he grew older, he became more combatant and argumentative. Not less a poet than he had been from the first, he became less careful in revision, misled, perhaps, by the facility with which he rhymed his thoughts, and by the fact that he did put his true mind into all he said. I know no other poet of as fine a touch whose later verse is so unequal in its quality. If any one could do for Wither what he ought to have done for himself, an edition of his works would give him a lasting place among the poets whom we choose for our companions. However that may be, "Faire Virtue" calls for no abridgment. Its very diffuseness may be said to add another grace. That and "The Shepherd's Hunting" can stand just as they sprang out of their writer's mind.

George Wither was born on the 11th of June 1588—in the year of the Spanish Armada—at Bent-

worth, near Alton, in Hampshire. He was the only son of George Wither of Bentworth, who was the second son of John Wither of Manydowne, near Wootton St. Lawrence, in the same county. His mother's name before marriage was Anne Serle. George Wither, in 1613, praised in a poem his old schoolmaster, a teacher of mark in his day, John Greaves of Colemore. From school he was sent to Oxford and entered at Magdalen College, where his tutor was John Warner, afterwards Bishop of Rochester. He had only begun to warm into his college studies when he was called home to give his mind to the farm at Bentworth. He was not apt for the work, studied, wrote verse, had aspirations of his own, and, as he was of little use upon the farm, there was suggestion of putting him to trade.

It was at this time that Wither wrote his early poem of "Faire Virtue the Mistress of Phil'arete." Phil'arete is only Greek for the Lover of Virtue, who has, therefore, Faire Virtue for Mistress. The pastoral opening of the poem describes his own country in Hampshire, with the Isle of Wight in view from the hills. He is himself the shepherd's boy, who sings in solitude of his love for the high ideal of all earthly good. He fashions Virtue as a woman to be loved, pours out all praise of goodliest perfections as types of the highest spiritual beauty.

"I must praise her as I may,
Which I do mine own rude way :
Sometime setting forth her glories
By unheard-of allegories.

Though I praise her skin by snow,
Or by pearls her double row,
'Tis that you may gather thence
Her unmatched excellence."

The fair ladies who come in upon his lonely singing, to whom the young poet pours out his

solitary song in praise of his ideal, and to whom in intervals of rest he gives his songs to read, may typify the fair audience of right-minded men and women who will hereafter take delight in Wither's music. The songs he shows them, that are set between the parts of "Faire Virtue," represent Wither's genius in its youth, and include one or two—"Shall I wasting in despair;" "Hence away, you sirens, leave me"—that will always rank with the best English lyrics. Indeed, the whole charm of this early poem is so great that it deserves wide currency. Hitherto it has been a scarce book, in which poets have delighted, and which English students find a pleasure in possessing.

From Bentworth, Wither at last found his way to London by entering himself as a law student at Lincoln's Inn. He sought the poets and was welcomed among their company. William Browne, whom Wither calls

"That happy swain that shall
Sing Britannia's Pastoral,"

was of the Inner Temple, and was among his friends. Young Wither had honoured in lines of his "Faire Virtue" Spenser, Sidney, Drayton. He obtained in London the good will of Ben Jonson. In 1612 he joined the choir of poets who wrote elegies upon the death of Prince Henry.

In 1613, George Wither, twenty-five years old, published a book of satires upon the Vices, under the name of "Abuses Stript and Whipt," in two books. It was a very honest outpouring, that condemned the vices of the time, in satires on the several passions—as Love, Lust, Hate, Envy, Revenge—and he said,

"If the great ones to offend be bold
I see no reason but they should be told."

The satires were as generous as they were sharp

in their attack on vice. He would tell what he knew,

“ And then if any frown (as sure they dare not),
So I speak truth, let them frown still, I care not.”

Wither was imprisoned in the Marshalsea for the offence he gave to some of the great ones. In prison he translated a Greek poem on the Nature of Man, wrote “A Satire to the King” in justification of himself, and wrote also the other work reprinted in this volume, the set of pastorals called “The Shepherd’s Hunting: being certain Eclogues written during the time of the Author’s Imprisonment in the Marshalsea.” The Shepherd is Philarete, himself, who, with ten couples of dogs, namely, the satires in “Abuses Stript and Whipt”—sixteen in the first book of those satires and four in the second—had hunted those foxes, wolves, and beasts of prey that spoil our folds and bear our lambs away. Wither’s motto—*Nec habeo, nec careo, nec curo*—“I have not, care not, want not,” was published in 1618. In 1622 he published his early poems as “Juvenilia,” and at the same time his “Faire Virtue,” his age being in that year thirty-four.

The “silver lake” at the beginning of the poem is at Alresford ” by transposition called the ford of Arle.” It is Alresford Pond, covering twenty-three acres. From it the Itchen flows to Southampton, where “brave Arthur kept his royal court.” “North-east, not far from this great Pool,” lies Bentworth. Wither begins, therefore, with description of the scenery about his father’s farm.

H. M.

Faire-Virtue;

OR,

THE MISTRESS OF PHILARETE.



Two pretty rills do meet, and meeting make
Within one valley a large silver lake :
About whose banks the fertile mountains stood,
In ages passéd bravely crowned with wood,
Which lending cold-sweet shadows gave it grace
To be accounted Cynthia's bathing-place ;
And from her father Neptune's brackish court,
Fair Thetis thither often would resort,
Attended by the fishes of the sea,
Which in those sweeter waters came to plea.
There would the daughter of the Sea God dive,
And thither came the Land Nymphs every eve
To wait upon her : bringing for her brows
Rich garlands of sweet flowers and beechy boughs.
For pleasant was that pool, and near it then
Was neither rotten marsh nor boggy fen,
It was nor overgrown with boisterous sedge,
Nor grew there rudely then along the edge
A bending willow, nor a prickly bush,
Nor broad-leaved flag, nor reed, nor knotty rush.
But here well-ordered was a grove with bowers,
There grassy plots set round about with flowers.
Here you might through the water see the land
Appear, strowed o'er with white or yellow sand ;
Yon deeper was it, and the wind by whiffs
Would make it rise and wash the little cliffs

On which, oft pluming, sat unfrighted than
The gaggling wild-goose and the snow-white swan,
With all those flocks of fowls which to this day,
Upon those quiet waters breed and play.
For though those excellences wanting be
Which once it had, it is the same that we
By transposition name the Ford of Arle,
And out of which, along a chalky marle,
That river trills whose waters wash the fort
In which brave Arthur kept his royal court.
North-east, not far from this great pool, there lies
A tract of becchy mountains, that arise,
With leisurely ascending, to such height
As from their tops the warlike Isle of Wight
You in the ocean's bosom may espy,
Though near two furlongs thence it lie.
The pleasant way, as up those hills you climb,
Is strewéd o'er with marjoram and thyme,
Which grows unset. The hedgerows do not want
The cowslip, violet, primrose, nor a plant
That freshly scents : as birch, both green and tall ;
Low sallows, on whose blooming bees do fall ;
Fair woodbines, which about the hedges twine ;
Smooth privet, and the sharp-sweet eglantine,
With many moe whose leaves and blossoms fair
The earth adorn and oft perfume the air.

When you unto the highest do attain,
An intermixture both of wood and plain
You shall behold, which, though aloft it lie,
Hath downs for sheep and fields for husbandry,
So much, at least, as little needeth more,
If not enough to merchandise their store.

In every row hath nature planted there
Some banquet for the hungry passenger.
For here the hazel-nut and filbert grows,
There bullice, and, a little farther, sloes.
On this hand standeth a fair weilding-tree,
On that large thickets of blackberries be.

The shrubby fields are raspice orchards there,
The new felled woods like strawberry gardens are,
And had the King of Rivers blessed those hills
With some small number of such pretty rills
As flow elsewhere, Arcadia had not seen
A sweeter plot of earth than this had been.

For what offence this place was scanted so
Of springing waters, no record doth show,
Nor have they old tradition left that tells ;
But till this day at fifty fathom wells
The shepherds drink. And strange it was to hear
Of any swain that ever livéd there,
Who either in a pastoral ode had skill,
Or knew to set his fingers to a quill.
For rude they were who there inhabited,
And to a dull contentment being bred
They no such art esteemed, nor took much heed
Of anything the world without them did.

Even there, and in the best frequented place
Of all these mountains, is a little space
Of pleasant ground hemmed in with dropping trees,
And those so thick that Phœbus scarcely sees
The earth they grow on once in all the year,
Nor what is done among the shadows there.

Along those lowly paths, where never came
Report of Pan, or of Apollo's name,
Nor rumour of the Muses till of late,
Some nymphs were wandering, and by chance or
fate

Upon a laund arrivéd, where they met
The little flock of pastor Philaret.
They were a troop of beauties known well nigh
Through all the plains of happy Brittany.
A shepherd's lad was he, obscure and young,
Who, being first that ever there had sung,
In homely verse expressed country loves,
And only told them to the beechy groves ;
As if to sound his name he never meant
Beyond the compass that his sheep-walk went.

They saw not him ; nor them perceivéd he :
 For in the branches of a maple-tree
 He shrouded sat, and taught the hollow hill
 To echo forth the music of his quill,
 Whose tattling voice redoubled so the sound
 That where he was concealed they quickly found.
 And there they heard him sing a madrigal
 That soon betrayed his cunning to them all.

Full rude it was, no doubt, but such a song
 Those rustic and obscuréd shades among
 Was never heard, they say, by any ear
 Until his Muses had inspiréd him there.
 Though mean and plain his country habit seemed,
 Yet by his song the ladies rightly deemed
 That either he had travelléd abroad
 Where swains of better knowledge make abode,
 Or else that some brave nymph who used that grove
 Had deignéd to enrich him with her love.

Approaching nearer, therefore, to this swain,
 They him saluted, and he them again,
 In such good fashion as well seemed to be
 According to their state and his degree.
 Which greetings being passéd, and much chat
 Concerning him, the place, and this and that,
 He to an arbour doth those beauties bring,
 Where he them prays to sit, they him to sing,
 And to express that untaught country art
 In setting forth the mistress of his heart,
 Which they o'erheard him practice, when, unseen,
 He thought no ear had witness of it been.

At first, as much unable, he refused,
 And seeméd willing to have been excused
 From such a task. For, "Trust me, nymphs," quoth
 he,
 "I would not purposely uncivil be,
 Nor churlish in denying what you crave,
 But, as I hope great Pan my flock will save,
 I rather wish that I might, heard of none,
 Enjoy my music by myself alone,

Or that the murmurs of some little flood,
 Joined with the friendly echoes of the wood,
 Might be the impartial umpires of my wit,
 Than vent it where the world might hear of it.
 And doubtless I had sung less loud while-ere
 Had I but thought of any such so near.
 Not that I either wish obscurified
 Her matchless beauty, or desire to hide
 Her sweet perfections ; for, by Love, I swear . .
 The utmost happiness I aim at here
 Is but to compass worth enough to raise
 A high-built trophy equal to her praise,
 Which, fairest ladies, I shall hope in vain.
 For I was meanly bred on yonder plain,
 And though I can well prove my blood to be
 Derived from no ignoble stems to me,
 Yet Fate and Time them so obscured and crost,
 That with their fortunes their esteem is lost.
 And whatsoe'er repute I strive to win,
 Now from myself alone it must begin ;
 For I have nor estate, nor friends, nor fame,
 To purchase either credit to my name
 Or gain a good opinion, though I do
 Ascend the height I shall aspire unto.
 If any of those virtues left I have
 Which honour to my predecessors gave,
 There's all that's left me. And though some
 contemn
 Such needy jewels, yet it was for them
 My Fair One did my humble suit affect,
 And deigned my adventurous love respect.
 And by their help I passage hope to make
 Through such poor things as I dare undertake.

" But, you may say, what goodly thing, alas,
 Can my despised meanness bring to pass ?
 Or what great Monument of honour raise
 To Virtue in these Vice-abounding days,
 In which a thousand times more honour finds
 Ignoble gotten means than noble minds ?
 Indeed, the world affordeth small reward

For honest minds, and therefore her regard
I seek not after ; neither do I care,
If I have bliss, how others think I fare.
For, so my thoughts have rest, it irks not me
Though none but I do know how blest they be.

“ Here, therefore, in these groves and hidden
 plains,
I pleaséd sit alone, and many strains
I carol to myself these hills among,
Where no man comes to interrupt my song.
Whereas if my rude lays make known I should
Beyond their home, perhaps some carpers would,
Because they have not heard from whence we be,
Traduce, abuse, and scoff both them and me.
For if our great and learned shepherds, who
Are graced with wit, and fame, and favours too,
With much ado escape uncensured may,
What hopes have I to pass unscoffed, I pray,
Who yet unto the Muses am unknown,
And live unhonoured here among mine own ?

“ A gadding humour seldom taketh me
To range out further than yon mountains be,
Nor hath applausive Rumour borne my name
Upon the speeding wings of sounding Fame.
Nor can I think, fair nymphs, that you resort
For other purpose than to make a sport
At that simplicity which shall appear
Among the rude untutored shepherds here.
I know that you my noble Mistress ween
At best a homely milk-maid on the green,
Or some such country lass as taskéd stays
At servile labour, until holy days ;
For poor men's virtues so neglected grow,
And are now prizéd at a rate so low,
As 'tis impossible you should be brought
To let it with belief possess your thought
That any nymph whose love might worthy be,
Would deign to cast respective eyes on me.

You see I live possessing none of those
Gay things with which the world enamoured
grows.

To woo a courtly beauty I have neither
Rings, bracelets, jewels, nor a scarf, nor feather.
I use no double dyéd cloth to wear ;
No scrip, embroidered richly, do I bear ;
No silken belt, nor sheep-hook laid with pearls,
To win me favour from the shepherds' girls.
No place of office or command I keep,
But this my little flock of homely sheep ;
And in a word, the sum of all my pelf
Is this, I am the master of myself.

“ No doubt in courts of princes you have
been,
And all the pleasures of the palace seen.
There you beheld brave courtly passages
Between heroës and their mistresses.
You there, perhaps in presence of the King,
Have heard his learned bards and poets sing.
And what contentment then can wood or field
To please your curious understandings yield ?
I know you walkéd hither but to prove
What silly shepherds do conceive of love,
Or to make trial how our simpleness
Compassion's force, or Beauty's power express,
And when you are departed, you will joy
To laugh or descant on the shepherd's boy.

“ But yet, I vow, if all the art I had
Could any more esteem or glory add
To her unmatched worth, I would not weigh
What you intended.”—“ Prithee, lad,” quoth
they,
“ Distrustful of our courtesy do not seem.
Her nobleness can never want esteem,
Nor thy concealéd measures be disgraced,
Though in a meaner person they were placed,
If thy too modestly reservéd quill
But reach that height which we suppose it will.

Thy meanness or obscureness cannot wrong
 The nymph thou shalt eternise in thy song,
 For as it higher rears thy glory that
 A noble Mistress thou hast aimed at,
 So more unto her honour it will prove
 That whilst deceiving shadows others move,
 Her constant eyes could pass unmoved by
 The subtle times' bewitching bravery,
 And those obscuréd virtues love in thee
 That with despiséd meanness clouded be.
 Now then for her sweet sake whose beauteous
 cye
 Hath filled thy soul with heavenly Poesie,
 Sing in her praise some new inspiréd strain:
 And if within our power there shall remain
 A favour to be done may pleasure thee,
 Ask, and obtain it, whatsoe'er it be."

"Fair ladies," quoth the lad, "such words as
 these
 Compel me can." And therewithal he rose,
 Returned them thanks, obeisance made, and
 than
 Down sat again, and thus to sing began.

YOU, that at a blush can tell
 Where the best perfections dwell,
 And the substance can conjecture
 By a shadow or a picture,
 Come and try if you by this
 Know my Mistress, who she is.

For though I am far unable
 Here to match Apelles' table;
 Or draw Zeuxis' cunning lines,
 Who so painted Bacchus' vines
 That the hungry birds did muster
 Round the counterfeited cluster;

Though I vaunt not to inherit
 Petrarch's yet unequalled spirit,
 Nor to quaff this sacred well
 Half so deep as Astrophel,
 Though the much commended Cœlia,
 Lovely Laura, Stella, Delia,
 Who in former times excelled,
 Live in lines unparalleled,
 Making us believe 'twere much
 Earth should yield another such :
 Yet, assisted but by Nature,
 I assay to paint a creature
 Whose rare worth in future years
 Shall be praised as much as theirs.

Nor let any think amiss
 That I have presumed this :
 For a gentle nymph is she,
 And hath often honoured me.
 She's a noble spark of light,
 In each part so exquisite,
 Had she in times passéd been
 They had made her beauty's queen.

Then shall cowardly despair
 Let the most unblemished fair,
 For default of some poor art,
 Which her favour may impart,
 And the sweetest beauty fade
 That was ever born or made ?
 Shall of all the fair ones she
 Only so unhappy be
 As to live in such a time,
 In so rude, so dull a clime,
 Where no spirit can ascend
 High enough to apprehend
 Her unprizéd excellence,
 Which lies hid from common sense ?
 Neither shall a stain so vile
 Blemish this our Poets' Isle,

I myself will rather run
And seek out for Helicon.
I will wash and make me clean
In the waves of Hippocrene,
And in spite of Fortune's bars
Climb the Hill that braves the stars.
Where, if I can get no Muse
That will any skill infuse,
Or my just attempt prefer,
I will make a Muse of Her:
Whose kind heart shall soon distil
Art into my ruder quill.
By her favour I will gain
Help to reach so rare a strain
That the learned hills shall wonder
How the untaught valleys under
Met with rapture so divine
Without knowledge of the Nine.

I that am a shepherd's swain,
Piping on the lowly plain,
And no other Music can
Than what learned I have of Pan ;
I who never sung the lays
That deserve Apollo's bays,
Hope not only here to frame
Measures which shall keep her name
From the spite of wasting times,
But enshrined in sacred rimes,
Place her where her form divine
Shall to after ages shine ;
And without respect of odds
Vie renown with demigods.

Then whilst of her praise I sing,
Hearken valley, grove, and spring ;
Listen to me, sacred fountains,
Solitary rocks and mountains ;
Satyrs, and you wanton elves
That do nightly sport yourselves ;

Shepherds, you that on the reed
Whistle while your lambs do feed ;
Aged woods and floods that know
What hath been long time ago,
Your more serious notes among
Hear how I can, in my song,
Set a nymph's perfection forth :
And when you have heard her worth,
Say if such another lass
Ever known to mortal was.

Listen, lordings, you that most
Of your outward honours boast ;
And you gallants that think scorn
We to lowly fortunes born
Should attain to any graces
Where you look for sweet embræes.
See if all those vanities
Whereon your affection lies
Or the titles or the power
By your fathers' virtues your,
Can your mistresses enshrine
In such state, as I will mine,
Who am forcéd to importune
Favours in despite of Fortune.

Beauties, listen ; chiefly you
That yet know not Virtue's due.
You that think there are no sports
Nor no honours but in Courts,
Though of thousands there live not
Two but die and are forgot :
See, if any palæe yields
Aught more glorious than the fields,
And consider well if we
May not as high-flying be
In our thoughts as you that sing
In the chambers of a king.
See, if our contented minds,
Whom Ambition never blinds,

We that, clad in homespun gray,
On our own sweet meadows play,
Cannot honour if we please
Where we list as well as these,
Or as well of worth approve,
Or with equal passion love.
See, if beauties may not touch
Our soon-loving hearts as much,
Or our services effect
Favours with as true respect
In your good conceits to rise,
As our painted butterflies.

And, you Fairest, give her room
When your sex's pride doth come :
For that Subject of my song
I invoke these groves among
To be witness of the lays
Which I carol in her praise.
And because she soon will see
If my measures faulty be,
Whilst I chant them let each rime
Keep a well-proportioned time,
And with strains that are divine
Meet her thoughts in every line.
Let each accent there present
To her soul a new content ;
And with ravishings so seize her
She may feel the height of pleasure.

You enchanting spells that lie
Lurking in sweet Poesie,
And to none else will appear
But to those that worthy are,
Make her know there is a power
Ruling in these charms of your
That transcends a thousand heights
Ordinary men's delights,
And can leave within her breast
Pleasures not to be exprest.
Let her linger on each strain
As if she would hear 't again,

And were loth to part from thence
Till she had the quintessence
Out of each conceit she meets,
And had stored her with those sweets.
Make her by your art to see,
I that am her swain was he
Unto whom all beauties here
Were alike and equal dear ;
That I could of freedom boast
And of favours with the most,
Yet now, nothing more affecting,
Sing of Her, the rest neglecting.

Make her heart, with full compassion,
Judge the merit of true passion,
And as much my love prefer
As I strive to honour her.

Lastly, you, that will, I know,
Hear me, whe'er you should or no ;
You that seek to turn all flowers,
By your breath's infectious powers,
Into such rank loathsome weeds
As your dunghill nature breeds,
Let your hearts be chaste, or here
Come not till you purge them clear.
Mark, and mark then what is worst,
For whate'er it seem at first,
If you bring a modest mind
You shall naught immodest find.

But if any too severe
Hap to lend a partial ear,
Or out of his blindness yawn
Such a word as " O, profane !"
Let him know thus much from me
If here's aught profane, 'tis he,
Who applies these excellences
Only to the touch of senses,
And, dim-sighted, cannot see
Where the soul of this may be.

Yet, that no offence may grow,
'Tis their choice to stay or go.
Or if any for despite
Rather comes, than for delight,
For his presence I'll not pray,
Nor his absence ; come he may.
Critics shall admitted be,
Though I know they'll carp at me ;
For I neither fear nor care,
What in this their censures are.

If the verse here uséd be
Their dislike, it liketh me.
If my method they deride,
Let them know, love is not tied
In his free discourse to choose
Such strict rules as arts-men use.
These may prate of love, but they
Know him not ; for he will play
From the matter now and then,
Off and on, and off again.

If this prologue tedious seem,
Or the rest too long they deem,
Let them know my love they win,
Though they go ere I begin ;
Just as if they should attend me
Till the last, and there commend me ;
For I will for no man's pleasure
Change a syllable or measure,
Neither for their praises add
Aught to mend what they think bad :
Since it never was my fashion
To make work of recreation.

Pedants shall not tie my strains
To our antique poets' veins,
As if we in latter days
Knew to love, but not to praise.
Being born as free as these,
I will sing as I shall please,

Who as well new paths may run,
As the best before have done.
I disdain to make my song
For their pleasure short or long ;
If I please, I'll end it here ;
If I list, I'll sing this year :
And though none regard of it,
By myself I pleased can sit,
And with that contentment cheer me,
As if half the world did hear me.

But because I am assuréd,
All are either so conjuréd,
As they will my song attend
With the patience of a friend,
Or at least take note that I
Care not much ; now willingly
I these goodly colours lay,
Wind nor rain shall wear away,
But retain their purest glass
When the statues made of brass,
For some prince's more renown,
Shall be wholly overthrown,
Or (consumed with cankered rust)
Lie neglected in the dust.

And my reason gives direction,
When I sing of such perfection :
First, those beauties to declare,
Which (though her's) without her are.
To advance her fame I find,
Those are of a triple kind.
Privileges she hath store,
At her birth, since, and before.
From before her birth the fame
She of high descents may claim,
Whose well-gotten honours may
Her deservings more display ;
For from heavenly race she springs,
And from high and mighty kings.

At her birth she was by fate
In those parents fortunate
Whose estates and virtues stood
Answerable to their blood.

Then the nation, time, and place
To the rest may add some grace ;
For the people with the clime,
And the fashions of the time
(In all which she hath been blest
By enjoying them at best),
Do not only mend the features,
But oft-times make better natures.
Whereas those who hap not so,
Both deform'd and ruder grow.

In these climes and later days
To deserve sweet beauty's praise
(Where so many females dwell
That each seemeth to excel)
Is more glory twenty-fold
Than it was in days of old,
When our ordinary fair ones
Might have been esteeméd rare ones,
And have made a subject fit
For the bravest poet's wit.
Little rush-lights or a spark
Shineth fairly in the dark,
And to him occasion gives,
That from sight of lesser lives
To adore it ; yet the ray
Of one torch will take away
All the light of twenty more
That shined very well before.
So those pretty beauties, which
Made the times before us rich,
Though but sparkles, seemed a flame,
Which hath been increased by fame,
And their true affections, who
Better never lived to know.

Whereas, her if they had seen,
She had once adoréd been,
And taught ages past to sing
Sweeter in their sonneting.

Such a ray, so clear, so bright,
Hath outshinéd all the light
Of a thousand such as theirs
Who were thén esteeméd stars,
And would have enlightened near
Half the world's wide hemispheré.
She is fairest, that may pass
For a fair one where the lass
Trips it on the country green
That may equal Sparta's queen ;
Where in every street you see
Throngs of nymphs and ladies be,
That are fair enough to move
Angels, and enamour Jove,
She must matchless beauties bring,
That now moves a muse to sing ;
Whenas one small province may
Show more beauties in a day
Than the half of Europe could
Breed them in an age of old.
Such is she, and such a lot
Hath her rare perfections got.

Since her birth to make the colour
Of so true a beauty fullér,
And to give a better grace
To that sweetness in the face,
She hath all the furtherance had
Noble educations add.
And not only knoweth all
Which our ladies courtship call,
With those knowledges that do
Grace her sex, and suit thereto,
But she hath attained to find
(What is rare with womankind)

Excellences, whereby she
May in soul delighted be,
And reap more contentment than
One of twenty thousand can.

By this means hath bettered been
All without her and within ;
For it hath by adding arts
To adorn her native parts,
Raised to a noble flame,
Which shall lighten forth her fame,
Those dear sparks of sacred fire
Which the Muses did inspire
At her birth ; that she complete
Might with them befit a seat.

But perhaps I do amiss
To insist so long on this.
These are superficial things,
And but slender shadowings
To the work I have in hand :
Neither can you understand
What her excellences may be,
Till herself described you see.
Nor can mine or any pen
Paint her half so lovely then,
As she is indeed ; for here
Might those deities appear,
Which young Paris viewed at will
Naked upon Ida hill ;
That I from those three might take
All their beauties one to make ;
Those, no question, well compact,
Would have made up one exact ;
Something yet we miss of might
To express her sweetness right.
Juno's majesty would fit ;
Venus' beauty, Pallas' wit,
Might have brought to pattern her's
In some showed particulars ;

But they never can express
Her whole form or worthiness
With those excellences which
Make both soul and body rich.

Pallas sometimes was untoward ;
Venus wanton ; Juno froward ;
Yea, all three infected were
With such faults as women are ;
And though falsely deified,
Frailties had which she'll deride.

By herself must therefore she,
Or by nothing, patterned be.
And I hope to paint her so
By herself, that you shall know
I have served no common dame
Of mean worth or vulgar fame,
But a nymph that's fairer than
Pen or pencil portrait can.
And to-morrow if you stray
Back again this uncouth way,
I my simple art will show ;
But the time prevents me now :
For except at yonder glade,
All the lawn is under shade ;
'That before these ewes are told,
Those my wethers in the fold,
Ten young weanlings driven down
To the well beneath the town,
And my lambkins changéd from
Broom-lease to the mead at home,
'Twill be far in night, and so
I shall make my father woe
For my stay, and be in fear
Somewhat is mischancéd here.
On your way I'll therefore bring you,
And a song or two I'll sing you,
Such as I, half in despair,
Made when first I woo'd my fair ;
Whereunto my boy shall play,
That my voice assist it may.

I.

COME, my muse, if thou disdain,
All my comforts are bereft me ;
No delight doth now remain,
I nor friend nor flock have left me,
They are scattered on the plain.

Men, alas I are too severe,
And make scoffs at lover's fortunes ;
Women, hearted like the bear,
That regards not who importunes,
But doth all in pieces tear.

If I should my sorrow show
Unto rivers, springs, or fountains,
They are senseless of my woe :
So are groves, and rocks, and mountains.
Then, oh, whither shall I go?

Means of harbour me to shield
From despair, ah ! know you any ?
For, nor city, grange, nor field
(Though they lend content to many)
Unto me can comfort yield.

I have wept and sighéd too,
For compassion to make trial ;
Yea, done all that words can do,
Yet have nothing but denial.
What way is there then to woo?

Shall I swear, protest, and vow ?
So have I done most extremely.
Should I die? I know not how ;
For from all attempts unseemly,
Love and virtue keep me now.

I have heard that time prevails,
But I fear me 'tis a fable ;
Time and all endeavour fails :
To bear more my heart's unable,
Yet none careth what it ails.

Lines to some have oped the door,
And got entrance for affection ;
Words well spoken much implore
By their gesture's good direction ;
But a look doth ten times more.

'Tis the eye that only reads
 To the heart love's deepest lectures ;
 By a moving look it pleads
 More than common sense conjectures,
 And a way to pity leads.

This I knowing did observe,
 Both by words and looks complaining ;
 Yet for pity I may starve :
 There's no hope of my obtaining,
 Till I better can deserve.

Yea, and he that thinks to win
 By desert, may be deceived ;
 For they who have worthiest been,
 Of their right have been bereaved,
 And a groom admitted in.

Wherefore, Muse, to thee I call ;
 Thou, since nothing else avails me,
 Must redeem me from my thrall.
 If thy sweet enchantment fails me,
 Then adieu love, life, and all !

II.

TELL me, my heart, what thought these pantings
 move ?

My thoughts of love.

What flames are these that set thee so on fire ?

Flames of desire.

What means hast thou, contentment's flower to
 crop ?

No means but hope.

Yet let us feed on hope, and hope the best ;
 For they amid their griefs are something blest,
 Whose thoughts, and flames, and means have such
 free scope,

They may at once both love, desire, and hope.

But say, what fruit will love at last obtain ?

Fruitless disdain.

What will these hopes prove, which yet seem so fair ?

Hopeless despair.

What end shall run those passions out of breath ?

An endless death.

Oh ! can there be such cruelty in love?
 And doth my fortune so ungentle prove,
 She will no fruit, nor hope, nor end bequeath,
 But cruellest disdain, despair, and death.

Then what new study shall I now apply?

Study to die.

How might I end my care, and die content?

Care to repent.

And what good thoughts may make my end more
 holy?

Think on thy folly.

Yes, so I will ; and since my fate can give
 No hope, but ever without hope to live,
 My studies, cares, and thoughts I'll all apply
 To weigh my folly well, repent, and die.

III.

SAD eyes, what do you ail
 To be thus ill disposéd?
 Why doth your sleeping fail,
 When all men's else are closéd?
 Was't I, who ne'er did bow
 In any servile duty ;
 And will you make me now
 A slave to love and beauty ?

What though thy mistress smile,
 And in her love affects thee?
 Let not her eye beguile,
 I hear she disrespects thee.
 Do not, poor heart, depend
 On those vain thoughts that fill thee ;
 They'll fail thee in the end,
 So must thy passions kill thee.

What hopes have I that she
 Will hold her favours ever,
 When so few women be
 That constant can perséver ?
 Whate'er she do protest,
 When fortunes do deceive me,
 Then she, with all the rest,
 I fear, alas ! will leave me.

Whilst youth and strength remain,
 With art that may commend her ;
 Perhaps she'll not disdain
 Her servant should attend her ;
 But it is one to ten,
 If crosses overtake me,
 She will not know me then,
 But scorn and so forsake me.

Shall then in earnest truth
 My careful eyes observe her ?
 Shall I consume my youth,
 And short my time to serve her ?
 Shall I beyond my strength
 Let passion's torments prove me,
 To hear her say at length,
 Away, I cannot love thee ?

Oh, rather let me die,
 Whilst I thus gentle find her ;
 'Twere worse than death if I
 Should find she proves unkind
 One frown, though but in jest,
 Or one unkindness feignéd,
 Would rob me of more rest
 Than ere could be regainéd.

But in her eyes I find
 Such sighs of pity moving,
 She cannot be unkind,
 Nor err, nor fail in loving ;
 And on her forehead this
 Seems written to relieve me ;
 My heart no joy shall miss,
 That love, or she, can give me

Which, if I find, I vow
 My service shall perséver ;
 The same that I am now,
 I will continue ever.
 No other's high degree,
 No beauteous look shall change me ;
 My love shall constant be,
 And no estate estrange me.

When other noble dames,
 By greater men attended,
 Shall with their lives and names
 Have all their glories ended ;

With fairest queens shall she
Sit, sharing equal glory,
And times to come shall be
Delighted with our story.

In spite of others' hates,
More honours I will do her
Than those that with estates
And helps of fortune woo her.
Yea, that true worth I spy,
Though monarchs strove to grace it,
They should not reach more high
Than I dare hope to place it.

And though I never vaunt
What favours are possesséd,
Much less content I want,
Than if they were expresséd.
Let others make their mirth
To blab each kiss or toying ;
I know no bliss on earth
Like secret love enjoying.

And this shall be the worst
Of all that can betide me ;
If I, like some accurst,
Should find my hopes deride me,
My cares will not be long,
I know which way to mend them ;
I'll think who did the wrong,
Sigh, break my heart, and end them.

HAIL, fair beauties ! and again,
Hail to all your goodly train !
What I promised yesterday,
If it please you, hear ye may ;
For now once begun have I,
Sing I will, though none were by.
And, though freely on I run,
Yet confuséd paths to shun,
First, that part shall be disclosed
That's of elements composed.
There the two unequal pair,
Water, fire, earth, and air

(Each one suiting a complexion),
 Have so cunning a commixion,
 As they in proportion sweet
 With the rarest tempers meet ;
 Either in as much as needeth,
 So as neither aught exceedeth.
 This pure substance is the same
 Which the body we do name.
 Were that of immortal stuff,
 'Tis refined and pure enough
 To be called a soul ; for sure
 Many souls are not so pure.
 I, that with a serious look
 Note of this rare model took,
 Find, that nature in their places
 So well couchéd all the graces,
 As the curioust eyes that be
 Can nor blot nor blemish see.

Like a pine it goeth straight
 Reaching an approvéd height,
 And hath all the choice perfections
 That inflame the best affections.
 In the motion of each part
 Nature seems to strive with art
 Which her gestures most shall bless
 With the gifts of pleasingness.

When she sits, methinks I see
 How all virtues fixé be
 In a frame, whose constant mould
 Will the same unchangéd hold.
 If you note her when she moves,
 Cytherea drawn with doves
 May come learn such winning motions
 As will gain to love's devotions
 More than all her painted wiles,
 Such as tears, or sighs, or smiles.

Some, whose bodies want true graces,
 Have sweet features in their faces ;

Others that do miss them there,
Lovely are some other where,
And to our desires do fit
In behaviour or in wit ;
Or some inward worth appearing
To the soul, the soul endearing :
But in her your eye may find
All that's good in womankind.
What in others we prefer
Are but sundry parts of her,
Who most perfect doth present
What might one and all content.
Yea he that in love still ranges,
And each day or hourly changes,
Had he judgment but to know
What perfections in her grow,
There would find the spring of store,
Swear a faith, and change no more.

Neither in the total frame
Is she only void of blame,
But each part surveyed asunder
Might beget both love and wonder.
If you dare to look so high,
Or behold such majesty,
Lift your wondering eyes and see
Whether aught can bettered be.

There's her hair with which love angles,
And beholders' eyes entangles ;
For in those fair curled snares
They are hampered unawares,
And compelled to swear a duty
To her sweet, enthralling beauty.
In my mind 'tis the most fair
That was ever called hair ;
Somewhat brighter than a brown,
And her tresses waving down
At full length, and so dispreed,
Mantle her from foot to head.

If you saw her archéd brow,
 Tell me, pray, what art knows how
 To have made it in a line
 More exact or more divine.
 Beauty there may be descried
 In the height of all her pride ;
 'Tis a meanly rising plain,
 Whose pure white hath many a vein
 Interlacing, like the springs
 In the earth's enamellings.
 If the tale be not a toy
 Of the little wingéd boy,
 When he means to strike a heart,
 Thence he throws the fatal dart ;
 Which of wounds still makes a pair,
 One of love, one of despair.

Round her visage, or so near
 To a roundness doth appear,
 That no more of length it takes
 Than what best proportion makes.

Short her chin is, and yet so
 As it is just long enow ;
 Loveliness doth seem to glory
 In that circling promontory.
 Pretty moving features skip
 'Twixt the hillock and the lip,
 If you note her but the while
 She is pleased to speak or smile.

And her lips, that show no dulness,
 Full are in the meanest fulness ;
 Those the leaves be, whose unfolding
 Brings sweet pleasures to beholding ;
 For such pearls they do disclose
 Both the Indies match not those ;
 Yet are so in order placed,
 As their whiteness is more graced.
 Each part is so well disposéd,
 And her dainty mouth composéd

So as there is no distortion
Misbeseems that sweet proportion.

When her ivory teeth she buries
'Twixt her two enticing cherries,
There appear such pleasures hidden
As might tempt what were forbidden.
If you look again, the whiles
She doth part those lips in smiles,
'Tis as when a flash of light
Breaks from heaven to glad the night.

Others may my pencil crave,
But those lips I cannot leave ;
For methinks, if I should go
And forsake those cherries so,
There's a kind of excellence
Would hold me from departing hence.
I would tell you what it were,
But my cunning fails me here.
They are like in their discloses
To the morning's dewy roses,
That beside the name of fair
Cast perfumes that fill the air.
Melting soft her kisses be,
And had I now two or three,
More inspiréd by their touch,
I had praised them twice as much.

But sweet Muses ! mark ye, how
Her fair eyes do check me now,
That I seemed to pass them so,
And their praises overgo !
And yet blame me not, that I
Would so fain have passed them by,
For I fearéd to have seen them,
Lest there were some danger in them.
Yet such gentle looks they lend,
As might make her foe a friend,
And by their allurings move
All beholders unto love.

Such a power is also there,
 As will keep those thoughts in fear,
 And command enough I saw
 To hold impudence in awe.
 There may he that knows to love
 Read contents which are above
 Their ignoble veins, who know
 Nothing that so high doth grow.
 Whilst she me beholding is,
 My heart dares not think amiss,
 For her sight, most piercing clear,
 Seems to see what's written there.

Those bright eyes, that with their light
 Oftentimes have blessed my sight,
 And in turning thence their shining
 Left me in sad darkness pining,
 Are the rarest, loveliest grey,
 And do cast forth such a ray,
 As the man that black prefers,
 More would like this grey of her's.
 When their matchless beams she shrouds,
 'Tis like Cynthia hid in clouds.
 If again she show them light,
 'Tis like morning after night.
 And 'tis worthy well beholding
 With how many a pretty folding
 Her sweet eyelids grace that fair,
 Meanly fringed with beaming hair,
 Whereby neatly overspread,
 Those bright lamps are shadowéd.

'Twixt the eyes no hollow place,
 Wrinkle, nor indecent space
 Disproportions her in aught,
 Though by envy faults were sought.

On those eyebrows never yet
 Did disdainful scowling sit.
 Love and goodness gotten thither,
 Sit on equal thrones together,

And do throw just scorn on them
That their government contemn.

Then, almost obscured, appears
Those her jewel-gracing ears,
Whose own beauties more adorn
Than the richest pearl that's worn
By the proudest Persian dames,
Or the best that nature frames.
Through the voice in love's meanders
Those their pretty circlings wanders,
Whose rare turnings will admit
No rude speech to enter it.

Stretching from Mount Forehead lies
Beauty's cape betwixt her eyes ;
Which two crystal-passing lakes
Love's delightful isthmus makes ;
Neither more nor less extending
Than most meriteth commending.
Those in whom that part hath been
Best deserving praises seen,
Or (surveyed without affection)
Came the nearest to perfection,
Would scarce handsome ones appear,
If with her compared they were.
For it is so much excelling
That it passeth means of telling.

On the either side of this
Love's most lovely prospect is ;
Those her smiling cheeks, whose colour
Comprehends true beauty fuller
Than the curioust mixtures can
That are made by art of man ;
It is beauty's garden-plot,
Where, as in a true-love's knot,
So the snowy lily grows
Mixed with the crimson rose,
That as friends they joinéd be ;
Yet they seem to disagree

Whether of the two shall reign ;
 And the lilies oft obtain
 Greater sway, unless a blush
 Help the roses at a push.
 Hollow fallings none there are,
 There's no wrinkle, there's no scar,
 Only there's a little mole,
 Which from Venus' cheek was stole.

If it were a thing in nature
 Possible that any creature
 Might decaying life repair
 Only by the help of air,
 There were no such salve for death
 As the balm of her sweet breath.
 Or if any human power
 Might detain the soul an hour,
 From the flesh to dust bequeathing,
 It would linger on her breathing ;
 And be half in mind that there
 More than mortal pleasures were.
 And whose fortune were so fair
 As to draw so sweet an air,
 Would no doubt let slighted lie
 The perfumes of Araby.
 For the English eglantine
 Doth through envy of her pine ;
 Violets and roses too
 Fear that she will them undo ;
 And it seems that in her breast
 Is composed the phoenix's nest.

But descend awhile, mine eye,
 See if polished ivory,
 Or the finest fleeced flocks,
 Or the whitest Albion rocks,
 For comparisons may stand
 To express that snowy hand.
 When she draws it from her glove,
 It hath virtue to remove,

Or disperse, if there be aught
Cloudeth the beholder's thought.
If that palm but toucheth your,
You shall feel a secret power
Cheer your heart, and glad it more,
'Though it drooped with grief before.

Through the veins, disposéd true,
Crimson yields a sapphire hue,
Which adds grace and more delight
By embracing with the white.
Smooth and moist, and soft and tender
Are her palms ; the fingers slender,
Tipt with mollifiéd pearl :
And if that transforméd girl,
Whose much cunning made her dare
With Jove's daughter to compare,
Had that hand worn, maugre spite,
She had shamed the goddess quite ;
For there is in every part
Nature perfecter than art.

These were joinéd to those arms,
That were never made for harms ;
But possess the sweetest graces
That may apt them for embraces.
Like the silver streams they be
Which from some high hill we see
Clipping in a goodly vale
That grows proud of such a thrall.

Neither alabaster rocks,
Pearl-strewed shores, nor Cotswold flocks,
Nor the mountains tipt with snow,
Nor the milk-white swans of Po,
Can appear so fair to me
As her spotless shoulders be.
They are like a work of state
Covered with the richest plate ;
And a presence have that strike
With devotions goddess-like.

'Twixt those shoulders, meanly spread,
To support that globe-like head,
Riseth up her neck, wherein
Beauty seemeth to begin
To disclose itself in more
Tempting manner than before,
How therein she doth excel,
Though I would, I cannot tell ;
For I nought on earth espy
That I may express it by.
Yea, from head to foot each feature
Shows her an unblemished creature,
In whom love with reason might
Find so matchless a delight,
That more cannot be acquired,
Nor a greater bliss desired.

Yet, if you will rest an hour
Under yonder shady bower,
I anon my muse will raise
To a higher pitch of praise.
But awhile with raspice-berries,
Strawberries, ripe pears, and cherries,
Such as these our grove do bear,
We will cool our palates here.
And those homely cates among,
Now and then a pastoral song
Shall my lad here sing and play,
Such as you had yesterday.

I.

A LAD, whose faith will constant prove,
And never know an end,
Late by an oversight in love
Displeased his dearest friend.
For which, incensed, she did retake
The favours which he wore,
And said, he never for her sake,
Should wear or see them more.

The grief whereof how near it went,
And how unkindly took,
Was figured by the discontent
Appeared in his look.
At first he could not silence break
(So heavy sorrow lay),
But when his sighs gave way to speak,
Thus sadly he did say :

"My only dear !" and with that speech
Not able to sustain
The floods of grief at sorrow's breach,
He paused awhile again.
At length (nigh fainting) did express
These words with much ado,
"O dear ! let not my love's excess
Me and my love undo !"

She, little moved with his pain,
His much distraction eyed ;
And changing love into disdain,
Thus (still unkind) replied :—
"Forbear to urge one kindness more,
Unless you long to see
The good respect you had before
At once all lost in me."

With that dismayed, his suit he ceased,
And down his head he hung ;
And as his reason's strength decreased
His passion grew more strong :
But seeing she did slight his moan,
With willow garlands wreathed,
He sat him down, and all alone,
This sad complaint he breathed :—

"O heavens !" quoth he, " why do we spend
Endeavours thus in vain,
Since what the fates do fore-intend,
They never change again ?
Nor faith, nor love, nor true desert,
Nor all that man can do,
Can win him place within her heart
That is not born thereto.

" Why do I fondly waste my youth
In secret sighs and tears ?
Why to preserve a spotless truth
Taste I so many cares ?

For women that no worth respect
Do so ungentle prove,
That some shall win by their neglect
What others lose by love.

" Those that have set the best at nought,
And no man could enjoy,
At last by some base gull are caught,
And gotten with a toy.
Yea, they that spend an age's light
Their favours to obtain,
For one unwilling oversight
May lose them all again.

" How glad and fain, alas, would I,
For her have underwent
The greatest care, ere she should try
The smallest discontent.
Yet she that may my life command,
And doth my passions know,
Denieth me a poor demand
In height of all my woe.

" Oh, if the noblest of her time,
And best beloved of me,
Could for so poor, so slight a crime,
So void of pity be;
Sure had it been some common one
Whose patience I had tried;
No wonder I had been undone,
Or unforgiven died.

" A thousand lives I would have laid,
So well I once believed
She would have deigned to lend me aid
If she had seen me grieved;
But now I live to see the day
Where I presumed so,
I neither dare for pity pray,
Nor tell her of my woe.

" Yet let not, poor despised heart,
Her worth aught questioned be;
Had'st thou not failed in desert,
She had not failed thee.
But lest perhaps they flout thy moan
That should esteem thee dear,
Go make it by thyself alone,
Where none may come to hear.

" Still keep thy forehead crowned with smiles,
 What passions e'er thou try,
 That some may laugh at thee, the whiles
 Thou discontented lie.
 And let no wrong by change distain
 A love so truly fair,
 But rather never hope again,
 And thou shalt ne'er despair."

II.

O, RETIRED by cruel passions that oppress me,
 With heart nigh broken, time no hope would
 give me,
 Upon my bed I laid me down to rest me,
 And gentle sleep I woo'd to relieve me.
 But ah, alas ! I found, that on the morrow
 My sleeping joys brought on my waking
 sorrow.

For, lo, a dream I had so full of pleasure,
 That to possess what to embrace I seemed
 Could not affect my joy in higher measure
 Than now it grieves me, that I have but dreamed.
 O, let my dreams be sighs and tears hereafter,
 So I, that sleeping weep, may wake in
 laughter !

Fain would I tell how much that shadow pleased
 me,
 But tongue and pen want words and art in telling :
 Yet this I'll say, to show what horror seized me
 When I was robbed of bliss so much excelling,
 Might all my dreams be such, O let me
 never
 Awake again, but sleep and dream for ever !

For when I waking saw myself deceiv'd,
 And what an inward hell it had procur'd
 To find myself of all my hopes bereav'd,
 It brought on passions not to be endur'd :
 And knew I next night had such dreams in
 keeping,
 I'd make my eyes forswear for ever sleeping.

III.

YOU woody hills, you dales, you groves,
 You floods and every spring,
 You creatures come, whom nothing moves,
 And hear a shepherd sing :
 For to heroes, nymphs, and swains
 I long have made my moan ;
 Yet what my mournful verse contains
 Is understood of none.

In song Apollo gave me skill,
 Their love his sisters deign ;
 With those that haunt Parnassus' hill
 I friendship entertain.
 Yet this is all in vain to me,
 So haplessly I fare,
 As those things which my glory be
 My cause of ruin are.

For love hath kindled in my breast
 His never-quenched fire,
 And I, who often have expressed
 What other men desire
 (Because I could so dive into
 The depth of others' moan),
 Now I my own affliction show,
 I heeded am of none.

Oft have the nymphs of greatest worth
 Made suit my songs to hear,
 As oft when I have sighed forth
 Such notes as saddest were,
 Alas ! said they, poor gentle heart,
 Whoe'er that shepherd be ;
 But none of them suspect my smart,
 Nor think it meaneth me.

When I have reached so high a strain
 Of passion in my song,
 That they have seen the tears to rain
 And trill my cheek along ;
 Instead of sigh, or weeping eye
 To sympathise with me,
 O were he once in love, they cry,
 How moving would he be !

O pity me, ye powers above,
And take my skill away ;
Or let my hearers think I love,
And feign not what I say.
For, if I could disclose the smart
Which I unknown do bear,
Each line would make them sighs impart,
And every word a tear.

Had I a mistress, some do think,
She should reveal'd be ;
And I would favours wear, or drink
Her health upon my knee.
Alas, poor fools, they aim awry,
Their fancy flags too low,
Could they my love's rare course espy
They would amaz'd grow.

But let nor nymph nor swain conceive
My tongue shall ever tell
Who of this rest doth me bereave,
Or where I am not well :
But if you sighing me espy,
Where rarest features be,
Mark where I fix a weeping eye
And swear you, there is she.

Yet ere my eyes betray me shall,
I'll swell and burst with pain ;
And for each drop they would let fall
My heart shall bleed me twain.
For since my soul more sorrow bears
Than common lovers know,
I scorn my passions should like theirs
A common humour show.

Ear never heard of heretofore
Of any love like mine ;
Nor shall there be for evermore
Affection so divine.
And that to feign it none may try,
When I dissolved must be ;—
The first I am it liv'd by,
And die it shall with me.

BOY, have done,—for now my brain
Is inspired afresh again,
And new raptures pressing are
To be sung in praise of her,
Whose fair picture lieth nigh
Quite unveiled to every eye.
No small favour hath it been
That such beauty might be seen ;
Therefore ever may they rue it
Who with evil eyes shall view it.
Yea, what ancient stories tell
Once to rude Actæon fell,
When with evil eyes he stood
Eying Cynthia in the flood,
May that fatal hornéd curse
Light upon them, or a worse.

But (whatever others be)
Lest some fault be found in me,
If imperfect this remain,
I will over-trim't again.
Therefore turn where we begun,
And now all is over-run,
Mark if every thing exprest
Suit not so unto the rest,
As if nature would prefer
All perfections unto her.
Wherefore seems it strange to any,
That they daily see so many
Who were else most perfect creatures,
In some one part want true features?
Since from all the fair'st that live
Nature took the best, to give
Her perfection in each part ;
I alone except her heart :
For among all woman-kind,
Such as her's is hard to find.

If you truly note her face,
You shall find it hath a grace

Neither wanton, nor o'er serious,
Nor too yielding, nor imperious :
But with such a feature blest,
It is that which pleaseth best,
And delights each several eye
That affects with modesty.
Lowliness hath in her look
Equal place with greatness took,
And if beauty any where
Claims prerogatives, 'tis there :
For at once thus much 'twill do,
Threat, command, persuade, and woo.

In her speech there is not found
Any harsh, unpleasing sound,
But a well-beseeming power,
Neither higher, neither lower
Than will suit with her perfection ;
'Tis the loadstone of affection.
And that man whose judging eyes
Could well sound such mysteries,
Would in love make her his choice,
Though he did but hear her voice ;
For such accents breathe not whence
Beauty keeps non-residence.
Never word of her's I hear
But 'tis music to mine ear,
And much more contentment brings
Than the sweetly-touched strings
Of the pleasing lute, whose strains
Ravish hearers when it plains.

Raised by her discourse, I fly
In contented thoughts so high,
That I pass the common measures
Of the dull'd sense's pleasures,
And leave far below my flight
Vulgar pitches of delight.

If she smile and merry be,
All about her are as she ;

For each looker-on takes part
Of the joy that's in her heart.
If she grieve, or you but spy
Sadness peeping through her eye,
Such a grace it seems to borrow,
That you'll fall in love with sorrow,
And abhor the name of mirth
As the hatefull'st thing on earth.
Should I see her shed a tear,
My poor eyes would melt, I fear ;
For much more in her's appears
Than in other women's tears,
And her look did never feign
Sorrow where there was no pain.

Seldom hath she been espied
So impatient as to chide ;
For if any see her so,
They'll in love with anger grow.
Sigh or speak, or smile or talk,
Sing or weep, or sit or walk,
Every thing that she doth do
Decent is and lovely too.
Each part that you shall behold
Hath within itself enrolled
What would you desire to see,
Or your heart conceive to be.
Yet if from that part your eye
Moving shall another spy,
There you see as much or more
Than you sought to praise before.

While the eye surveys it, you
Will imagine that her brow
Hath all beauty ; when her cheek
You behold, it is as like
To be deeméd fairest too,
So much there can beauty do.
Look but thence upon her eye,
And you wonder by and by

How there may be any where
So much worthy praise as there.
Yet if you survey her breast,
Then as freely you'll protest
'That in it perfection is ;
'Though I know that one poor kiss
From her tempting lips would then
Make all that forsworn again.
For the self-same moving grace
Is at once in every place.

She her beauty never foils
With your ointments, waters, oils,
Nor no loathsome fucus settles,
Mix'd with Jewish fasting-spittles.
Fair by nature being born,
She doth borrowed beauty scorn.
Whoso kisses her needs fear
No unwholesome varnish there ;
For from thence he only sips
The pure nectar of her lips ;
And at once with these he closes
Melting rubies, cherries, roses.

Then in her behaviour she
Striveth but herself to be ;
Keeping such a decent state,
As indeed she seems to hate
Precious leisure should be spent
In abuséd compliment.
Though she knows what others do,
And can all their courtship too,
She is not in so ill case
As to need their borrowed grace.

Her discourses sweetened are
With a kind of artless care,
That expresseth greater art
'Than affected words impart.
So her gestures, being none
But that freeness which alone

Suits the braveness of her mind,
Make her of herself to find
Postures more becoming far
Than the mere acquired are.

If you mark, when for her pleasure,
She vouchsafes to foot a measure,
Though with others' skill she pace,
There's a sweet delightful grace
In herself which doth prefer
Art beyond that art in her.

Neither needs she beat her wit
To devise what dressing's fit ;
Her complexion and her feature
So beholding are to nature,
If she in the fashions go,
All the reason she doth so
Is, because she would not err
In appearing singular :
Doubtless not for any thought
That 'twill perfect her in aught.

Many a dainty-seeming dame
Is in native beauties lame ;
Some are gracéd by their tires,
As their coifs, their hats, their wires ;
One a ruff doth best become ;
Falling bands much altereth some ;
And their favours oft we see
Changéd as their dressings be ;
Which her beauty never fears,
For it graceth all she wears.
If ye note her tire to-day,
That doth suit her best, you'll say ;
Mark what she next morn doth wear,
That becomes her best you'll swear ;
Yea, as oft as her you see,
Such new graces still there be

As she ever seemeth graced
Most by that she weareth last,
Though it be the same she wore
But the very day before.

When she takes her tires about her
(Never half so rich without her)
At the putting on of them,
You may liken every gem
To those lamps which at a play
Are set up to light the day.
For their lustre adds no more
To what Titan gave before ;
Neither doth their pretty gleamings
Hinder aught his greater beamings.
And yet, which is strange to me,
When those costly deckings be
Laid away, there seems descried
Beauties which those veils did hide.
And she looks as doth the moon
Passed some cloud through which she shone ;
Or some jewel watch, whose case
Set with diamonds, seems to grace
What it doth contain within,
Till the curious work be seen ;
Then 'tis found that costly shrining
Did but hinder t'other's shining.

If you chance to be in place,
When her mantle she doth grace,
You would presently protest
Irish dressings were the best.
If again she lay it down,
While you view her in a gown,
And how those her dainty limbs
That close-bodied garment trims,
You would swear, and swear again,
She appeared loveliest then.

But if she, so truly fair,
Should untie her shining hair,

And at length that treasure shed,
Jove's enduréd Ganimed,
Neither Cytherea's joy,
Nor the sweet self-loving boy
Who in beauty did surpass,
Nor the fair'st that ever was,
Could to take you prisoner bring
Looks so sweetly conquering.

She excels her whom Apollo
Once with weeping eyes did follow ;
Or that nymph who, shut in towers,
Was beguiled with golden showers ;
Yea, and she whose love was wont
To swim o'er the Hellespont
For her sake (though in attire
Fittest to inflame desire)
Seemed not half so fair to be,
Nor so lovely as is she.
For the man whose happy eye
Views her in full majesty,
Knows she hath a power that moves
More than doth the queen of loves
When she useth all her power
To inflame her paramour.

And sometime I do admire
All men burn not with desire.
Nay, I muse her servants are not,
Pleading love ; but oh ! they dare not.
And I therefore wonder why
They do not grow sick and die.
Sure they would do so, but that
By the ordinance of fate
There is some concealéd thing,
So each gazer limiting,
He can see no more of merit
Than beseems his worth and spirit.
For in her a grace there shines
That o'er-daring thoughts confines ;

Making worthless men despair
To be loved of one so fair.
Yea the destinies agree
Some good judgments blind should be,
And not gain the power of knowing
Those rare beauties in her growing.
Reason doth as much imply :
For if every judging eye
Which beholdeth her should there
Find what excellences are,
All, o'ercome by those perfections,
Would be captive to affections ;
So in happiness unblest,
She for lovers should not rest.
This well heeding think upon,
And if there be any one
Who alloweth not the worth
Which my Muse hath painted forth,
Hold it no defect in her ;
But that he's ordained to err.
Or if any female wight
Should detract from this I write,
She, I yield, may show her wit,
But disparage her no whit.
For on earth few women be
That from envy's touch are free ;
And who ever envy knew
Yield those honours that were due.

Though sometime my song I raise
To unusual heights of praise,
And break forth as I shall please
Into strange hyperboles,
'Tis to show conceit hath found
Worth beyond expression's bound.
Though her breath I do compare
To the sweet'st perfumes that are ;
Or her eyes, that are so bright,
'To the morning's cheerful light ;
Yet I do it not so much
To infer that she is such,

As to show that being blest
With what merits name of best,
She appears more fair to me
Than all creatures else that be.

Her true beauty leaves behind
Apprehensions in my mind
Of more sweetness than all art
Or inventions can impart ;
Thoughts too deep to be expressed,
And too strong to be suppressed ;
Which oft raiseth my conceits
To such unbeliev'd heights,
That I fear some shallow brain
Thinks my Muses do but feign.
Sure he wrongs them if he do :
For could I have reach'd to
So like strains as these you see ;
Had there been no such as she ;
Is it possible that I,
Who scarce heard of poesy,
Should a mere idea raise
To as true a pitch of praise,
As the learned poets could
Now, or in the times of old,
All those real beauties bring
Honoured by their sonneting,
Having arts and favours too,
More to encourage what they do ?
No, if I had never seen
Such a beauty, I had been
Piping in the country shades
To the homely dairy-maids
For a country fiddler's fees,
Clouted cream, and bread and cheese.

I no skill in numbers had
More than every shepherd's lad,
Till she taught me strains that were
Pleasing to her gentle ear.

Her fair splendour and her worth
From obscureness drew me forth ;
And because I had no Muse,
She herself deigned to infuse
All the skill, by which I climb
To these praises in my rhyme :
Which if she had pleased to add
To that art sweet Drayton had ;
Or that happy swain that shall
Sing Britannia's Pastoral ;
Or to theirs, whose verse set forth
Rosalind and Stella's worth ;
They had doubled all their skill
Gainéd on Apollo's hill ;
And as much more set her forth,
As I'm short of them in worth.
They had unto heights aspired,
Might have justly been admired ;
And in such brave strains had moved,
As of all had been approved.

I must praise her as I may,
Which I do mine own rude way ;
Sometime setting forth her glories
By unheard-of allegories.
Think not that my Muse now sings
Mere absurd or feigné things,
If to gold I like her hair,
Or to stars her eyes so fair :
Though I praise her skin by snow,
Or by pearls her double row ;
'Tis that you may gather thence
Her unmatched excellence.

Eyes as fair (for eyes) hath she,
As stars fair, for stars, may be.
And each part as fair doth show
In its kind as white as snow.
'Tis no grace to her at all,
If her hair I sunbeams call ;

For were there a power in art
So to pourtray every part,
All men might those beauties see
As they do appear to me,
I would scorn to make compare
With the glorioust things that are.

Nought I e'er saw fair enow
But the hair the hair to show ;
Yet some think him over-bold,
That compares it but to gold.
He from reason seems to err,
Who, commending of his dear,
Gives her lips the rubies' hue,
Or by pearls her teeth doth show.
But what pearls, what rubies can
Seem so lovely fair to man,
As her lips whom he doth love,
When in sweet discourse they move :
Or her lovelier teeth, the while
She doth bless him with a smile !

Stars indeed fair creatures be ;
Yet among us where is he,
Joys not more the whilst he lies
Sunning in his mistress's eyes,
Than in all the glimmering light
Of a starry winter's night ?

Him to flatter most suppose,
That prefers before the rose,
Or the lilies while they grow,
Or the flakes of new-fall'n snow,
Her complexion whom he loveth :
And yet this my Muse approveth.
For in such a beauty meets
Unexpressive moving sweets,
That the like unto them no man
Ever saw but in a woman.
Look on moon, on stars, on sun,
All GOD'S creatures overrun ;

See if all of them present
To your mind such sweet content ;
Or if you from them can take
Aught that may a beauty make
Shall one half so pleasing prove
As is hers, whom you do love ;
For indeed, if there had been
Other mortal beauties seen,
Objects for the love of men,
Vain was their creation then.
Yea, if this could well be granted,
Adam might his Eve have wanted.
But a woman is the creature
Whose proportion with our nature
Best agrees, and whose perfections
Sympathise with our affections,
And not only finds our senses
Pleasure in their excellences,
But our reason also knows
Sweetness in them, that outgoes
Human wit to comprehend,
Much more, truly to commend.

Note the beauty of an eye,
And if aught you praise it by
Leave such passion in your mind,
Let my reason's eye be blind.
Mark if ever red or white
Anywhere gave such delight
As when they have taken place
In a worthy woman's face.
He that so much hath not noted,
Will not, or is grown besotted.

Such as lovers are, conceive
What impressions beauty leave ;
And those hearts that fire have took
By a love-inflaming look,
Those believe what here I say,
And suppose not that I stray
In a word by setting forth
Any praise beyond true worth.

And yet wherefore should I care
 What another's censures are,
 Since I know her to be such,
 As no praise can be too much?
 All that see her will agree
 In the self-same mind with me,
 If their wit be worth the having,
 Or their judgment merit craving.
 And the man that kens her not,
 Speaks at best he knows not what :
 So his envy or good will
 Neither doth her good nor ill.

Then fools' cavils I disdain,
 And call back my Muse again
 To decipher out the rest,
 For I have too long digressed.

This is she in whom there meets
 All variety of sweets ;
 An epitome of all
 That on earth we fair may call :
 Nay, yet more I dare aver,
 He that is possessed of her
 Shall at once all pleasure find
 That is reaped from womankind.

Oh, what man would further range,
 That in one might find such change?
 What dull eye such worth can see,
 And not sworn a lover be?
 Or from whence was he could prove
 Such a monster in his love,
 As in thought to use amiss
 Such unequalled worth as this?
 Pity 'twere that such a creature,
 Phoenix-like, for matchless feature,
 Should so suffer, or be blamed
 With what now the times are shamed.

Beauty, unto me divine,
Makes my honest thoughts incline
Unto better things than that
Which the vulgar aimeth at.
And I vow I grieve to see
Any fair and false to be ;
Or when I sweet pleasures find
Matched with a defiléd mind,
But, above all others, her
So much doth my soul prefer,
That to him whose ill desire
Should so nurse a lawless fire
As to tempt to that which might
Dim her sacred virtue's light,
I could wish that he might die,
Ere he did it, though 'twere I.

For if she should hap to stray,
All this beauty would away ;
And not her alone undo,
But kill him that praised her too.
But I know her Maker will
Keep her undistainéd still,
That ensuing ages may
Pattern out by her the way
To all goodness. And if fate,
That appoints all things a date,
Hear me would, I'd wish that she
Might for aye preservéd be ;
And that neither wasting cares,
Neither all-consuming years,
Might from what she is estrange her,
Or in mind or body change her.
For, O why, should envious time
Perpetrate so vile a crime
As to waste, or wrong, or stain
What shall ne'er be matched again !

Much I hope, it shall not be ;
For if love deceive not me

To that height of fair she grows,
Age or sickness (beauties' foes)
Cannot so much wrong it there,
But enough there will appear
Ever worthy to be loved ;
And that heart shall be more moved
(Where there is a judging eye)
With those prints it doth espy
Of her beauty wronged by time,
Than by others in their prime.

One advantage she hath more,
That adds grace to all before.
It is this ; her beauty's fame
Hath not done her honour shame :
For where beauty we do find,
Envy still is so unkind,
That although their virtues are
Such as pass their beauties far,
Yet on slander's rocks they be
Shipwrecked, oftentimes we see ;
And are subject to the wrongs
Of a thousand spiteful tongues,
When the greatest fault they had,
Was that some would make them bad ;
And not finding them for action,
Sought for vengeance by detraction.

But her beauty sure no tongue
Is so villainous to wrong.
Never did the jealous ear
Any muttering rumour hear
That might cause the least suspects
Of indifferent defects,
And which somewhat stranger is,
They whose slanders few can miss,
Though set on by evil will
And habituated ill,
Nothing can of her invent
Whence to frame disparagement.

Which, if we respect the crimes
Of these loose injurious times,
Doth not only truly prove
Great discretion in her love,
And that she hath lived upright
In each jealous tongue's despite ;
But it must be understood
That her private thoughts are good.
Yea, 'tis an apparent sign
That her beauty is divine,
And that angels have a care
Men's polluting tongues should spare
To defile what GOD hath given
To be dear to earth and heaven.

Tell me, you that hear me now,
Is there any one of you
Wanteth feeling of affection,
Or that loves not such perfection ?
Can there be so dull an ear
As of so much worth to hear
And not seriously incline
To this saint-like friend of mine ?
If there be, the fault doth lie
In my artless poesy ;
For if I could reach the strain,
Which methinks I might obtain,
Or but make my measures fly
Equal with my fantasy,
I would not permit an ear
To attend unravished here ;
If but so much sense it knew
As the blocks that Orpheus drew.

Think on this description well,
And you noblest ladies tell,
Which of you that worth can see,
This my mistress would not be ?

You, brave English, who have run
From the rising of the sun,

'Till in travelling you found
Where he doth conclude his round ;
You that have the beauties seen
Which in farthest lands have been,
And surveyed the fair resorts
Of the French and Spanish courts,
With the best that fame renowns
In the rich Trans-Alpine towns,
Do not, with our brainless fry,
That admire each novelty,
Wrong your country's fame in aught,
But here freely speak your thought ;
And I durst presume you'll swear
She's not matchéd anywhere.

Gallants, you that would so fain
Nymphs' and ladies' loves obtain ;
You that strive to serve and please
Fairest queens and empresses :
Tell me this, and tell me right,
If you would not, so you might,
Leave them all despised to prove
What contents are in her love ?

Could your fathers ever tell
Of a nymph did more excel ?
Or hath any story told
Of the like in times of old ?
Dido was not such an one,
Nor the Trojan's Paragon,
Though they so much favour found,
As to have their honours crowned
By the best of poet's pens,
Ever known before or since.

For had Dido been so fair,
Old Anchises' noble heir
Jove's command had disobeyed,
And with her in Carthage stayed ;
Where he would have quite foreswore,
Seeing the Lavinian shore :

Or had Leda's daughter been,
When she was the Spartan queen,
Equal with this lovely one,
Menelaus had never gone
From her sight so far away
As to leave her for a prey,
And his room to be possest
By her wanton Phrygian guest.

But lest yet among you some
Think, she may behind these come,
Stay a little more and hear me,
In another strain I'll rear me.
I'll unmask a beauty now
Which to kiss, the gods may bow ;
And so feelingly will move,
That your souls shall fall in love.

I have yet the best behind,
Her most fair unequalled Mind.
This that I have here exprest
Is but that which veils the rest,
An incomparable shrine
Of a beauty more divine.
Whereof ere I farther speak,
Off again my song I'll break ;
And if you among the roses,
Which yon quickset hedge encloses,
Will with plucking flowers beguile
Tedious-seeming time awhile,
Till I step to yonder green
Whence the sheep so plain are seen,
I will be returnéd ere
You an hour have stayéd there.
And excuse me, now, I pray,
Though I rudely go away,
For affairs I have to do
Which, unless I look into,
I may sing out summer here
Like the idle grasshopper,

And at winter hide my head,
Or else fast till I am dead.

Yet if rustic pastoral measures
Can aught add unto your pleasures,
I will leave you some of those
Which it pleased me to compose
When despairing fits were over ;
And I, made a happy lover,
Exercised my loving passion
In another kind of fashion,
Than to utter I deviséd
When I feared to be despiséd ;
Those shall lie in gage for me
Till I back returnéd be,
And in writing here you have them :
Either sing, or read, or leave them.

I.

ADMIRE not, Shepherd's Boy,
Why I my pipe forbear,
My sorrows and my joy
Beyond expression are.
Though others may
In songs display
Their passions while they woo,
Yet mine do fly
A pitch too high
For words to reach unto.

If such weak thoughts as those
With others fancy move,
Or if my breast did close
But common strains of love,
Or passion's store
Learned me no more
To feel than others do,
I'd paint my cares
As black as theirs
And teach my lines to woo.

But oh, thrice happy ye
Whose mean conceit is dull !
You from those thoughts are free
That stuff my breast so full :
My love's excess
Lets to express
What songs are used to,
And my delights
Take such high flights
My joys will me undo.

I have a Love that's fair,
Rich, wise, and nobly born ;
She's true Perfection's heir,
Holds nought but Vice in scorn.
A heart to find
More chaste, more kind,
Our plains afford no moe ;
Of her degree
No blab I'll be,
For doubt some Prince should woo.

And yet I dare not fear,
Though she my meanness knows,
The willow branch to wear,
No, nor the yellow hose.
For if great Jove
Should sue for love
She would not me forego :
Resort I may
By night or day,
Which braver dare not do.

You gallants born to pelf,
To lands, to title's store,
I'm born but to myself,
Nor do I care for more.
Add to your earth,
Wealth, honours, birth,

And all you can thereto,
 You cannot prove
 The height of love
 Which I in meanness do.

Great men have helps to gain
 Those favours they implore,
 Which though I win with pain,
 I find my joys the more.
 Each clown may rise
 And climb the skies
 When he hath found a stair;
 But joy to him
 That dares to climb
 And hath no help but air.

Some say that Love repents
 Where fortunes disagree,
 I know the high'st contents
 From low beginnings be.
 My love's unfeigned
 To her that deigned
 From greatness stoop thereto.
 She loves 'cause I,
 So mean, dared try
 Her better worth to woo.

And yet although much joy
 My fortune seems to bless,
 'Tis mixed with more annoy
 Than I shall e'er express:
 For with much pain
 Did I obtain
 The gem I'll ne'er forego:
 Which yet I dare
 Nor show, nor wear;
 And that breeds all my woe.

But fie, my foolish tongue,
 How loosely now it goes!
 First let my knell be rung
 Ere I do more disclose.

Mount thoughts on high !
Cease words ! for why,
My meaning to divine
To those I leave
That can conceive
So brave a love as mine.

And now, no more I'll sing
Among my fellow swains ;
Nor groves nor hills shall ring
With echoes of my plains.
My measures be
Confused, you see,
And will not suit thereto :
'Cause I have more
Brave thoughts in store
Than words can reach unto.

II.

HENCE away, you Syrens, leave me
And unclasp your wanton arms ;
Sugared words shall ne'er deceive me
Though thou prove a thousand charms.
Fie, fie, forbear !
No common snare
Could ever my affection chain :
Your painted baits
And poor deceits
Are all bestowed on me in vain

I'm no slave to such as you be ;
Neither shall a snowy breast,
Wanton eye, or lip of ruby
Ever rob me of my rest.
Go, go, display
Your beauty's ray

To some o'er soon enamoured swain ;
 Those common wiles
 Of sighs and smiles
 Are all bestowed on me in vain.

I have elsewhere vowed a duty ;
 Turn away thy tempting eyes.
 Show not me a naked beauty,
 Those impostures I despise.
 My spirit loathes
 Where gaudy clothes
 And feignéd oaths may love obtain.
 I love Her so
 Whose look swears No,
 That all your labours will be vain.

Can he prize the tainted posies
 Which on every breast are worn,
 That may pluck the spotless roses
 From their never-touchéd thorn ?
 I can go rest
 On her sweet breast
 That is the pride of Cynthia's train :
 Then hold your tongues,
 Your Mermaid songs
 Are all bestowed on me in vain.

He's a fool that basely dallies
 Where each peasant mates with him.
 Shall I haunt the throngéd vallies
 Whilst there's noble hills to climb ?
 No, no ; though clowns
 Are scared with frowns,
 I know the best can but disdain :
 And those I'll prove ;
 So shall your love
 Be all bestowed on me in vain.

Yet I would not deign embraces
 With the greatest, fairest she,
 If another shared those graces
 Which had been bestowed on me.

I gave that one
My love, where none
Shall come to rob me of my gain,
Your fickle hearts
Make tears, and arts,
And all bestowed on me in vain.

I do scorn to vow a duty
Where each lustful lad may woo.
Give me her whose sun-like beauty
Buzzards dare not soar unto.
She, she it is
Affords that bliss
For which I would refuse no pain.
But such as you,
Fond fools, adieu,
You seek to captive me in vain.

Proud she seemed in the beginning,
And disdained my looking on :
But that coy one in the winning
Proved a true one being won.
Whate'er betide
Shall ne'er divide
The favour she to me shall deign ;
But your fond love
Will fickle prove,
And all that trust in you are vain.

Therefore know, when I enjoy one,
And for love employ my breath,
She I court shall be a coy one,
Though I win her with my death.
A favour there
Few aim at dare.
And if, perhaps, some lover plain
She is not won,
Nor I undone,
By placing of my love in vain.

Leave me then, you Syrens, leave me ;
 Seek no more to work my harms :
 Crafty wiles cannot deceive me,
 Who am proof against your charms,
 You labour may
 To lead astray
 The heart that constant shall remain :
 And I the while
 Will sit and smile
 To see you spend your time in vain.

OH, how honoured are my songs,
 Graced by your melodious tongues !
 And how pleasing do they seem,
 Now your voices carol them !
 Were not yet that task to do
 Which my word enjoins me to,
 I should beg of you to hear
 What your own inventions were.
 But before I aught will crave
 What I promised you shall have.
 And as I on mortal creatures
 Called to view her body's features,
 Showing how to make the senses
 Apprehend her excellences,
 Now, I speak of no worse subject
 Than a Soul's and Reason's object,
 And relate a beauty's glories
 Fitting heavenly auditories,
 Therefore, whilst I sit and sing,
 Hem me, Angels, in a ring !
 Come, ye Spirits which have eyes
 That can gaze on Deities,
 And unclogged with brutish senses
 Comprehend such excellences.
 Or if any mortal ear
 Would be granted leave to hear

And find profit with delight
In what now I shall indite,
Let him first be sure to season
A preparéd heart with reason,
And with judgment drawing nigh,
Lay all fond affections by :
So through all her veilings he
Shall the soul of beauty see.

But avoid you earth-bred wights,
Cloyed with sensual appetites ;
On base objects glut your eyes,
Till your starveling pleasure dies ;
Feed your ears with such delights
As may match your gross conceits ;
For within your muddy brain
These you never can contain.

Think not you, who by the sense
Only judge of excellence,
Or do all contentment place
In the beauty of a face,
That these highest thoughts of our
Soar so base a pitch as your.
I can give, as well as you,
Outward beauties all their due ;
I can most contentments see
That in love or women be.

Though I doat not on the features
Of our daintiest female creatures,
Nor was e'er so void of shames
As to play their lawless games ;
I more prize a snowy hand
Than the gold on Tagus' strand ;
And a dainty lip before
All the greatest monarch's store.
Yea, from these I reap as true
And as large contents as you.

Yet to them I am not tied ;
I have rarer sweets espied,

Wider prospects of true pleasure
 Than your curbed thoughts can measure.
 In her soul my soul describes
 Objects that may fill her eyes ;
 And the beauty of her mind
 Shows my reason where to find
 All my former pleasures doubled ;
 Neither with such passion troubled
 As wherewith it oft was crost,
 Nor so easy to be lost.

I, that ravished lay well nigh,
 By the lustre of her eye,
 And had almost sworn affection
 To the fore-expressed perfection,
 As if nothing had been higher
 Whereunto I might aspire ;
 Now have found by seeking nearer
 Inward worth, that shining clearer
 By a sweet and secret moving,
 Draws me to a dearer loving ;
 And whilst I that love conceive,
 Such impressions it doth leave
 In the intellective part,
 As defaceth from my heart
 Ev'ry thought of those delights
 Which allure base appetites ;
 And my mind so much employs
 In contemplating those joys
 Which a purer sight doth find
 In the beauty of her mind,
 That I so thereon am set,
 As methinks I could forget
 All her sweetest outward graces,
 Though I lay in her embraces.

But some, thinking with a smile
 What they would have done the while,
 Now suppose my words are such
 As exceed my power too much :

For all those our wantons hold
Void of vigour, dull, and cold,
Or at best but fools, whose flame
Makes not way unto their shame ;
Though at length with grief they see,
They the fools do prove to be.

These the body so much minded,
That their reason, over-blinded
By the pleasures of the sense,
Hides from them that excellence
And that sweetness, whose true worth
I am here to blazon forth.

'Tis not, 'tis not, those rare graces
That do lurk in women's faces ;
'Tis not a displayed perfection,
Youthful eyes nor clear complexion,
Nor a skin smooth satin-like,
Nor a dainty rosy cheek,
That to wantonness can move
Such as virtuously do love.
Beauty rather gently draws
Wild desires to reason's laws,
And oft frights men from that sin
They had else transgresséd in,
Through a sweet amazement strook
From an over-ruling look.
Beauty never tempteth men
To lasciviousness, but when
Careless idleness hath brought
Wicked longings into thought.
Nor doth youth, or heat of blood, ..
Make men prove what is not good ;
Nor the strength of which they vaunt.
'Tis the strength and power they want,
And the baseness of the mind,
Make their brute desires inclined
To pursue those vain delights,
Which affect their appetites ;

And so blinded do they grow,
Who are overtaken so,
As their dulness cannot see,
Nor believe that better be.
Some have blood as hot as their
Whose affections loosest are ;
Bodies that require no art
To supply weak nature's part,
Youth they have, and sure might too
Boast of what some shameless do.
Yet their minds, that aim more high
Than those baser pleasures lie,
Taught by virtue, can suppress
All attempts of wantonness ;
And such powerful motives frame
To extinguish passion's flame,
That by reason's good direction,
Qualifying loose affection,
They'll, in midst of beauty's fires,
Walk unscorched of ill desires.

Yet no such as stupid shame
Keeps from actions worthy blame,
But in all so truly man,
That their apprehensions can
Prize the body's utmost worth,
And find many pleasures forth
In those beauties, more than you
That abuse them, ever knew.

But perhaps her outward grace
Here described hath ta'en such place
In some o'er-enamoured breast,
And so much his heart possest,
As he thinks it passeth telling
How she may be more excelling,
Or what worth I can prefer
To be more admired in her.
Therefore, now I will be brief,
To prevent that misbelief ;

And if there be present here
Any one, whose nicer ear
Tasks my measures as offending,
In too seriously commending
What affects the sense, or may
Injure virtue any way ;
Let them know 'tis understood,
That if they were truly good
It could never breed offence
That I showed the excellence,
With the power of GOD and nature,
In the beauty of His creature.
'They from thence would rather raise
Cause to meditate His praise ;
And thus think how fair must He,
'That hath made this fair one, be !

That was my proposéd end ;
And to make them more attend
Unto this, so much excelling
As it passeth means of telling.

But at worst, if any strain
Makes your memories retain
Sparks of such a baneful fire
As may kindle ill desire ;
This that follows after shall
Not alone extinguish all,
But e'en make you blush with shame
That your thoughts were so to blame.
Yet I know, when I have done,
In respect of that bright sun
Whose inestimable light
I would blazon to your sight,
These ensuing flashes are,
As to Cynthia's beams, a star ;
Or a petty comet's ray
To the glorious orb of day.
For what power of words or art
Can her worth at full impart ?

Or what is there may be found
Placed within the senses' bound,
That can paint those sweets to me
Which the eye of love doth see?
Or the beauties of that mind
Which her body hath enshrined?

Can I think the Guide of Heaven
Hath so bountifully given
Outward features, 'cause He meant
To have made less excellent
Her divine part? Or suppose
Beauty goodness doth oppose;
Like those fools who do despair
To find any good and fair?
Rather there I seek a mind
Most excelling, where I find
GOD hath to the body lent
Most beseeming ornament.
But though he that did inspire
First the true Promethean fire,
In each several soul did place
Equal excellence and grace,
As some think; yet have not they
Equal beauties every way:
For they more or less appear
As the outward organs are;
Following much the temperature
Of the body, gross or pure.
And I do believe it true,
That as we the body view
Nearer to perfection grow,
So the soul herself doth show
Others more and more excelling
In her power, as in her dwelling:
For that pureness giveth way
Better to disclose each ray
To the dull conceit of man
Than a grosser substance can.
'Thus, through spotless crystals, we
May the day's full glory see:

When, if clearest sunbeams pass
Through a foul, polluted glass,
So discoloured they'll appear
As those stains they shone through were.

Let no critic cavil then,
If I dare affirm again,
That her mind's perfections are
Fairer than her body's far ;
And I need not prove it by
Axioms of philosophy,
Since no proof can better be
Than their rare effects in me ;
For, whilst other men complaining
Tell their mistresses' disdaining,
Free from care I write a story
Only of her worth and glory.

Whilst most lovers pining sit,
Robbed of liberty and wit,
Vassalling themselves with shame
To some proud imperious dame ;
Or in songs their fate bewailing,
Show the world their faithless failing,
I, enwreathed with bows of myrtle,
Fare like the belovéd turtle.

Yea, while most are most untoward,
Peevish, vain, inconstant, froward ;
While their best contentments bring
Nought but after-sorrowing ;
She those childish humours slighting,
Hath conditions so delighting,
And doth so my bliss endeavour,
As my joy increaseth ever.

By her actions, I can see
That her passions so agree
Unto reason, that they err
Seldom to distemper her.

Love she can, and doth, but so
As she will not overthrow
Love's content by any folly,
Or by deeds that are unholy.
Doatingly she ne'er affects,
Neither willingly neglects
Her honest love, but means doth find
With discretion to be kind.
'Tis not thundering phrase nor oaths,
Honours, wealth, nor painted clothes,
That can her good-liking gain,
If no other worth remain.

Never took her heart delight
In your court-hermaphrodite,
Or such frothy gallants as
For the times' heroës pass ;
Such who, still in love, do all
Fair, and sweet, and lady call,
And where'er they hap to stray
Either prate the rest away,
Or of all discourse to seek,
Shuffle in at cent or gleek.

Goodness more delights her than
All their mask of folly can.
Fond she hateth to appear,
Though she hold her friend as dear
As her part of life unspent,
Or the heart of her content.
If the best of youthful fires
Warm her blood with those desires
Which are by the course of nature
Stirred in every perfect creature ;
As those passions kindle, so
Doth heaven's grace and reason grow
Ablert to suppress in her
Those rebellions ; and they stir
Never more affection than
One good thought allays again.

I could say, so chaste is she
As the new-blown roses be,
Or the drifts of snow that none
Ever touched or looked upon.
But that were not worth a fly,
Seeing so much chastity
Old Pygmalion's picture had :
Yea, those eunuchs born or made
Ne'er to know desire, might say,
She deserved no more than they.
Whereas, whilst their worth proceeds
From such wants, as they must needs
Be unmoved, 'cause nature framed
No affections to be tamed,
Through her dainty limbs are spread
Vigour, heat, and freely shed
Lifeblood into every vein,
Till they fill and swell again ;
And no doubt they strive to force
Way in some forbidden course,
Which by grace she still resists, .
And so curbs within their lists
Those desires, that she is chaster
Than if she had none to master.

Malice never lets she in ;
Neither hates she aught but sin.
Envy if she could admit,
There's no means to nourish it.
For her gentle heart is pleased
When she knows another's eased ;
And there's none who ever got
That perfection she hath not :
So, that no cause is there, why
She should any one envy.

Mildly angry she'll appear,
That the baser rout may fear
Through presumption to misdo :—
Yet she often feigns that too.

But let wrong be whatsoever,
She gives way to choler never.

If she e'er of vengeance thought,
'Twas nor life nor blood was sought ;
But at most some prayer to move
Justice for abuséd love,
Or that fate would pay again
Love's neglectors with disdain.

If she ever craved of fate
To obtain a higher state,
Or ambitiously were given,
Sure 'twas but to climb to heaven.
Pride is from her heart as far
As the poles in distance are ;
For her worth not all this praise
Can her humble spirit raise
Less to prize me than before,
Or herself to value more.

Were she vain, she might allege
'Twas her sex's privilege ;
But she's such, as doubtless no man
Knows less folly in a woman.

To prevent her being idle,
Sometimes with her curious needle,
Though it be her meanest glory,
She so limns an antique story,
As Minerva, would she take it,
Might her richest sample make it.

Other while, again, she rather
Labours with delight to gather
Knowledge from such learned writs
As are left by famous wits ;
Where she chiefly seeks to know
GOD, herself, and what we owe
To our neighbour ; since with these
Come all needful knowledges.

She with Adam never will
Long to learn both good and ill ;
But, her state well understood,
Rests herself content with good.

Avarice abhorreth she,
As the loathsom'st thing that be ;
Since she knows it is an ill
That doth ripest virtue kill ;
And where'er it comes to rest,
Though in some strict matron's breast,
Be she ne'er so seeming just,
I'll no show of goodness trust :
For if you but gold can bring,
Such are hired to anything.

If you think she jealous be,
You are wide ; for, credit me,
Her strongest jealousies nought are,
Other than an honest care
Of her friends : and most can tell,
Whoso wants that, loves not well.

Though some little fear she shows,
'Tis no more than love allows ;
So the passion do not move her
Till she grieve or wrong her lover,
She may think he may do ill ;
Though she'll not believe he will ;
Nor can such a harmless thought
Blemish true affection aught ;
Rather, when as else it would
Through security grow cold,
This her passion, keeping measure,
Strengthens love and sweetens pleasure.

Cruelty her soul detests ;
For within her bosom rests
Noblest pity, ushered by
An unequalled courtesy,
And is grieved at good men's moan,
As the grief were all her own.

Just she is ; so just, that I
Know she would not wrong a fly,
Or oppress the meanest thing
To be mistress to a king.

If our painters would include
Temperance and fortitude
In one picture, she would fit
For the nonce to pattern it.

Patient as the lamb is she ;
Harmless as the turtles be.
Yea, so largely stored with all
Which we mortals goodness call,
That if ever virtue were,
Or may be incarnate here,
This is she, whose praises I
Offer to eternity.

She's no image trimmed about,
Fair within, and foul without ;
But a gem, that doth appear,
Like the diamond, everywhere
Sparkling rays of beauty forth,
All of such unblemished worth,
That wer't possible your eye
Might her inmost thoughts espy,
And behold the dimmest part
Of the lustre in her heart,
It would find that centre pass
What the superficies was ;
And that every angle there
Like a diamond's inside were.

For although that excellence
Pass the piercing'st eye of sense,
By their operations we
Guess at things that hidden be.
So, beyond our common reach,
Wise men can by reason teach

What the influences have been
Of a planet, when unseen ;
Or the beauty of a star
That doth shine above us far.
So, by that wide beaming light
Wherewith Titan courts our sight,
By his clothing of the earth,
By the wond'rous, varied birth
Of new creatures, yearly bred
Through his heat and nourishéd ;
And by many virtues moe,
Which our senses reach unto,
We conclude, they are not all,
Which make fair that goodly ball.

Though she prize her honour more
Than the far-fetched precious store
Of the rich Molucchi, or
All the wealth was trafficked for
Since our vessels passage knew
Unto Mexico, Peru,
Or those spacious kingdoms which
Make the proud Iberians rich ;
'Tis not that uncertain blast
Keeps my mistress good or chaste.
She, that but for honour's sake
Doth of ill a conscience make ;
(More in fear what rumour says
Than in love to virtuous ways)
Though she seemed more civil than
You have seen a courtezan
For an honour ; and cries, fie !
At each show of vanity ;
Though she with the Roman dame
Kill herself to purchase fame ;
She would prostitute become
To the meanest, basest groom,
If so closely they may do it
As the world should never know it.
So at best those women prove
That for honour Virtue love.

Give me her that goodness chooseth
 For its own sake, and refuseth
 To have greatest honours gained,
 With her secret conscience stained ;
 Give me her that would be poor ;
 Die disgraced ; nay, thought a whore,
 And each time's reproach become,
 Till the general day of doom,
 Rather than consent to act
 Pleasing sin, though by the fact
 (With esteem of virtuous) she
 Might the German empress be.
 Such my mistress is ; and nought
 Shall have power to change her thought.
 Pleasures cannot tempt her eye
 On their baits to glance awry,
 For their good she still esteems,
 As it is, not as it seems ;
 And she takes no comfort in
 Sweetest pleasure soured with sin.

By herself she hath such care,
 That her actions decent are ;
 For were she in secret hid,
 None might see her what she did,
 She would do, as if for spies
 Every wall were stuck with eyes ;
 And be chary of her honour,
 'Cause the heavens do look upon her.
 And, O what had power to move
 Flames of lust, or wanton love,
 So far to disparage us,
 If we all were minded thus ?
 These are beauties that shall last
 When the crimson blood shall waste,
 And the shining hair wax grey,
 Or with age be borne away :
 These yield pleasures, such as might
 Be remembered with delight,
 When we gasp our latest breath
 On the loathed bed of death.

Though discreetly speak she can,
She'll be silent rather than
Talk while others may be heard ;
As if she did hate or feared
Their condition, who will force
All to wait on their discourse.
Reason hath on her bestowed
More of knowledge than she owed
To that sex ; and grace with it
Doth aright her practice fit.

Yet hath fate so framéd her
As she may at sometime err ;
But if e'er her judgment stray,
Tis that other women may
Those much pleasing beauties see
Which in yielding natures be.
For, since no perfection can
Here on earth be found in man,
There's more good in free submissions
Than there's ill in our transgressions.
Should you hear her once contend
In discoursing to defend
(As she can) a doubtful cause,
She such strong positions draws
From known truths, and doth apply
Reasons with such majesty,
As if she did undertake
From some oracle to speak ;
And you could not think what might
Breed more love or more delight.

Yet, if you should mark again
Her discreet behaviour, when
She finds reason to repent
Some wrong-pleaded argument,
She so temperately lets all
Her misheld opinions fall,
And can with such mildness bow,
As 'twill more enamour you

Than her knowledge ; for, there are
 Pleasing sweets without compare
 In such yieldings, which do prove
 Wit, humility, and love.
 Yea, by those mistakings, you
 Her condition so shall know,
 And the nature of her mind
 So undoubtedly shall find,
 As will make her more endeared
 Than if she had never erred.

Farther, that she nought may miss
 Which worth praise in woman is,
 This unto the rest I add ;
 If I wound or sickness had,
 None should for my curing run,
 No, not to Apollo's son ;
 She so well the virtue knows
 Of each needful herb that grows,
 And so fitly can apply
 Salves to every malady,
 That if she no succour gave me,
 'Twere no means of art could save me.

Should my soul oppresséd lie,
 Sunk with grief and sorrow nigh,
 She hath balm for minds distrest,
 And could ease my painéd breast ;
 She so well knows how to season
 Passionate discourse with reason,
 And knows how to sweeten it
 Both with so much love and wit,
 That it shall prepare the sense
 To give way with less offence ;
 For grieved minds can ill abide
 Counsel churlishly applied ;
 Which, instead of comfortings,
 Desperation often brings.

But hark ye, nymphs ! methinks I hear
 Music sounding in mine ear.

'Tis a lute ; and he's the best
 For a voice in all the west,
 That doth touch it. And the swain
 I would have you hear so fain,
 That my song forbear will I
 To attend his melody.

Hither comes he, day by day,
 In these groves to sing and play ;
 And in yon close arbour he
 Sitteth now, expecting me.
 He so bashful is, that mute
 Will his tongue be and his lute,
 Should he happen to espy
 This unlooked for company.

If you, therefore, like to hear him,
 Let's with silence walk more near him.
 'Twill be worth your pains, believe me,
 If a voice content may give ye ;
 And await you shall not long,
 For he now begins a song.

1.

WHAT is the cause, when elsewhere I resort,
 I have my gestures and discourse more free ?
 And, if I please, can any beauty court,
 Yet stand so dull and so demure by thee ?
 Why are my speeches broken whilst I talk ?
 Why do I fear almost thy hand to touch ?
 Why dare I not embrace thee as we walk,
 Since with the greatest nymphs I've dared as
 much ?
 Ah ! know that none of those I e'er affected ;
 And therefore, used a careless courtship there ;
 Because I neither their disdain respected,
 Nor reckoned them nor their embraces dear.
 But, loving thee, my love hath found content,
 And rich delight in things indifferent.

II.

WHY covet I thy blessed eyes to see,
 Whose sweet aspect may cheer the saddest mind?
 Why, when our bodies must divided be,
 Can I no hour of rest or pleasure find?
 Why do I sleeping start, and waking moan,
 To find that of my dreaméd hopes I miss?
 Why do I often contemplate alone
 Of such a thing as thy perfection is?
 And wherefore, when we meet, doth passion stop
 My speechless tongue, and leave me in a panting?
 Why doth my heart, o'ercharged with fear and
 hope
 (In spite of reason), almost droop to fainting?
 Because in me thy excellences moving
 Have drawn me to an excellence in loving.

III.

FAIR, since thy virtues my affections move,
 And I have vowed my purpose is to join
 In an eternal band of chastest love
 Our souls, to make a marriage most divine,
 Why (thou may'st think) then seemeth he to prize
 An outward beauty's fading hue so much?
 Why doth he read such lectures in mine eyes,
 And often strive my tender palm to touch?
 Oh, pardon my presuming; for I swear,
 My love is soiled with no lustful spot;
 Thy soul's perfections through those veils appear;
 And I half faint, that I embrace them not.
 No foul desires doth make thy touches sweet,
 But my soul striveth with thy soul to meet.

IV.

SHALL I, wasting in despair,
 Die, because a woman's fair?
 Or make pale my cheeks with care,
 'Cause another's rosy are?
 Be she fairer than the day,
 Or the flow'ry meads in May;
 If she be not so to me,
 What care I how fair she be.

Should my heart be grieved or pined
 'Cause I see a woman kind?
 Or a well-disposéd nature
 Joinéd with a lovely creature?
 Be she meeker, kinder, than
 Turtle-dove or pelican :
 If she be not so to me,
 What care I how kind she be.

Shall a woman's virtues move
 Me to perish for her love?
 Or, her well-deserving known,
 Make me quite forget mine own?
 Be she with that goodness blest
 Which may gain her name of best :
 If she be not such to me,
 What care I how good she be.

'Cause her fortune seems too high,
 Shall I play the fool and die?
 Those that bear a noble mind,
 Where they want of riches find,
 Think what with them they would do
 That without them dare to woo.
 And unless that mind I see,
 What care I though great she be.

Great, or good, or kind, or fair,
 I will ne'er the more despair ;
 If she love me, this believe,
 I will die ere she shall grieve.
 If she slight me, when I woo,
 I can scorn, and let her go.
 For, if she be not for me,
 What care I for whom she be.

V.

I WANDERED out awhile ago,
 And went I knew not whither ;
 But there do beauties, many a one,
 Resort, and meet together ;
 And Cupid's power will there be shown,
 If ever you come thither.

For, like two suns, two beauties bright,
 I shining saw together ;
 And, tempted by their double light,
 My eyes I fixed on either :
 Till both at once so thrall'd my sight,
 I loved and knew not whether.

Such equal sweetness Venus gave,
 That I preferred not either ;
 And when for love I thought to crave,
 I knew not well of whether.
 For one while this I wished to have,
 And then I that had liefer.

A lover of the curioust eye
 Might have been pleased in either ;
 And so, I must confess, might I,
 Had they not been together.
 Now, both must love, or both deny ;
 In one enjoy I neither.

But yet at last I 'scaped the smart
 I feared at coming hither ;
 For, seeing my divided heart,
 I choosing, knew not whether,
 Love angry grew, and did depart ;
 And now I care for neither.

SEE, these trees so ill did hide us
 That the shepherd hath espied us,
 And (as jealous of his cunning)
 All in haste away is running.
 'To entreat him back again
 Would be labour spent in vain.
 You may therefore now betake ye
 To the music I can make ye,
 Who do purpose my invention,
 Shall pursue my first intention.
 For in her whose worth I tell,
 Many excellences dwell
 Yet unmentioned, whose perfections
 Worthy are of best affections.

That, which is so rare to find
 Both in man and womankind ;
 That, whose absnce love defaceth,
 And both sexes more disgraceth
 Than the spite of furrowed age,
 Sickneses, or sorrow's rage ;
 That's the jewel so divine,
 Which doth on her forehead shine :
 And therewith endowed is she,
 In an excellent degree ;
 Constancy, I mean, the purest
 Of all beauties, and the surest ;

· This, a servant made me sworn,
 Who before-time, held in scorn
 To yield vassalage, or duty,
 Though unto the queen of beauty.
 Yet, that I her servant am,
 It shall more be to my fame
 Than to own these woods and downs,
 Or be lord of fifty towns ;
 And my mistress to be deemed,
 Shall more honour be esteemed
 Than those titles to acquire
 Which most women most desire.
 Yea, when you a woman shall
 Countess or a duchess call,
 That respect it shall not move,
 Neither gain her half such love
 As to say, lo ! this is she
 That supposéd is to be
 Mistress to Phil'areté,
 And that lovely nymph, which he,
 In a pastoral poem famed,
 And Fair Virtue there hath named.
 Yea, some ladies (ten to one)
 If not many now unknown,
 Will be very well apaid
 When by chance she hears it said,
 She, that fair one is, whom I
 Here have praised concealedly.

And, though now this age's pride
May so brave a hope deride ;
Yet, when all their glories pass
As the thing that never was,
And on monuments appear,
That they e'er had breathing here,
Who envy it ; she shall thrive
In her fame, and honoured live,
Whilst Great Britain's shepherds sing
English in their sonneting.
And whoe'er in future days
Shall bestow the utmost praise
On his love that any man
Attribute to creature can,
'Twill be this, that he hath dared
His and mine to have compared.

O what stars did shine on me,
When her eyes I first did see !
And how good was their aspect,
When we first did both affect !
For, I never since to changing
Was inclined, or thought of ranging.

Me so oft my fancy drew
Here and there, that I ne'er knew
Where to place desire before
So that range it might no more
But, as he that passeth by
Where, in all her jollity,
Flora's riches in a row
Doth in seemly order grow,
And a thousand flowers stand
Bending, as to kiss his hand ;
Out of which delightful store
One he may take, and no more.
Long he pausing, doubteth whether
Of those fair ones he should gather.

First, the primrose courts his eyes,
Then the cowslip he espies ;

Next the pansy seems to woo him,
Then carnations bow unto him ;
Which, whilst that enamoured swain
From the stalk intends to strain,
As half-fearing to be seen
Prettily her leaves between
Peeps the violet, pale, to see
That her virtues slighted be ;
Which so much his liking wins,
That to seize her he begins.
Yet, before he stooped so low,
He his wanton eye did throw
On a stem that grew more high,
And the rose did there espy,
Who, besides her precious scent
To procure his eyes content,
Did display her goodly breast,
Where he found at full exprest
All the good that nature showers
On a thousand other flowers.
• Wherewith he, affected, takes it ;
His belovéd flower he makes it,
And, without desire of more,
Walks through all he saw before.

So I, wandering but erewhile,
Through the garden of this isle,
Saw rich beauties I confess,
And in number, numberless.
Yea, so differing lovely too,
That I had a world to do
Ere I could set up my rest,
Where to choose and choose the best.

One I saw, whose hair excelled,
On another's brow there dwelled
Such a majesty, it seemed
She was best to be esteemed.

This had with her speeches won me ;
That with silence had undone me.

On her lips the graces hung ;
 The other charmed me with her tongue.
 In her eyes a third did bear,
 That which did anew ensnare.
 Then a fourth did fairer show ;
 Yet wherein I did not know,
 Only this perceivéd I,
 Somewhat pleased my fantasy.
 Now the Wealth I most esteemed ;
 Honour then I better deemed ;
 Next the love of Beauty seized me,
 And then Virtue better pleased me.
 Juno's love I nought esteemed,
 Whilst a Venus fairer seemed ;
 Nay, both could not me suffice,
 Whilst a Pallas was more wise.
 Though I found enough in one
 To content if still alone.

Amarillis I did woo,
 And I courted Phillis too ;
 Daphne, for her love, I chose ;
 Cloris, for that damask rose
 In her cheek, I held as dear ;
 Yea, a thousand liked well near.
 And, in love with all together,
 Fearéd the enjoying either ;
 'Cause to be of one possest,
 Barred the hope of all the rest.

Thus I fondly feared, till fate,
 Which (I must confess in that
 Did a greater favour to me
 Than the world can malice do me)
 Showed to me that matchless flower,
 Subject for this song of our.
 Whose perfection having eyed,
 Reason instantly espied
 That desire (which ranged abroad)
 There would find a period.

And no marvel if it might,
For it there hath all delight,
And in her hath nature placed
What each several fair one graced.

Nor am I alone delighted
With those graces all united,
Which the sense's eye doth find
Scattered throughout womankind ;
But my reason finds perfections
To inflame my soul's affections.
Yea, such virtues she possesseth,
As with firmest pleasures blesseth ;
And keeps sound that beauty's state,
Which would else grow ruinate.

In this flower are sweets such store,
I shall never wish for more ;
Nor be tempted out to stray
For the fairest buds in May.

Let who list (for me) advance
The admiréd flowers of France ;
Let who will praise and behold
The reservéd marigold ;
Let the sweet-breathed violet now,
Unto whom she pleaseth, bow ;
And the fairest lily spread,
Where she will, her golden head :
I have such a flower to wear
That for those I do not care.

Never shall my fancy range,
Nor once think again of change ;
Never will I, never more,
Grieve or sigh, as heretofore ;
Nor within the lodgings lie
Of despair or jealousy.

Let the young and happy swains,
Playing on the Britain plains,

Court unblamed their shepherdesses,
And with their gold curléd tresses,
Toy uncensured until I
Grudge at their prosperity.

Let all times, both present, past,
And the age that shall be last,
Vaunt the beauties they bring forth.
I have found in one such worth,
That, content, I neither care
What the best before me were ;
Nor desire to live and see
Who shall fair hereafter be.
For I know the hand of nature
Will not make a fairer creature.

Which, because succeeding days
Shall confess, and add their praise
In approving, what my tongue,
Ere they had their being, sung :
Once again, come, lend an ear,
And a rapture you shall hear
(Though I taste no Thespian spring),
Will amaze you, whilst I sing.
I do feel new strains inspiring,
And to such brave heights aspiring,
That my Muse will touch a key
Higher than you heard to-day.

I have beauties to unfold
That deserve a pen of gold ;
Sweets that never dreamed of were ;
Things unknown, and such as ear
Never heard a measure sound,
Since the sun first ran his round.

When Apelles, limned to life
Loathéd Vulcan's lovely wife,
With such beauties he did trim
Each sweet feature, and each limb,

And so curiously did place
Every well-becoming grace,
That 'twas said, ere he could draw
Such a piece, he naked saw
Many women in their prime,
And the fairest of that time,
From all which he parts did take,
Which aright disposéd, make
Perfect beauty. So, when you
Know what I have yet to show,
It will seem to pass so far
Those things that expresséd are,
That you will suppose I've been
Privileged, where I have seen
All the good that's spread in parts,
Through a thousand women's hearts,
With their fair'st conditions lie
Bare, without hypocrisy;
And that I have took from thence
Each disperséd excellence,
To express her who hath gained
More than ever one obtained.

And yet, soft ! I fear in vain
I have boasted such a strain ;
Apprehensions ever are
Greater than expression far.
And my striving to disclose
What I know, hath made me lose
My invention's better part ;
And my hopes exceed my art.

Speak I can, yet think I more ;
Words, compared with thoughts, are poor.
And I find, had I begun
Such a strain, it would be done
When we number all the sands
Washed o'er perjured Goodwin's lands ;
For of things I should indite,
Which I know are infinite.

I do yield ; my thoughts did climb
 Far above the power of rhyme ;
 And no wonder it is so,
 Since there is no art can show
 Red in roses, white in snow ;
 Nor express how they do grow.
 Yea, since bird, beast, stone, and tree
 (That inferior creatures be)
 Beauties have, which we confess,
 Lines unable to express ;
 They more hardly can enroll
 Those that do adorn a soul.
 But, suppose my measures could
 Reach the height I thought they would,
 Now relate I would not, though,
 What did swell within me so.
 For if I should all descry,
 You would know as much as I ;
 And those clowns the Muses hate
 Would of things above them prate,
 Or with their profaning eyes
 Come to view those mysteries
 Whereof (since they disesteemed them)
 Heaven hath unworthy deemed them.

And, beside, it seems to me
 That your ears nigh tired be.
 I perceive, the fire that charmeth
 And inspireth me, scarce warmeth
 Your chill hearts. Nay, sure were I
 Melted into poesy,
 I should not a measure hit,
 (Though Apollo prompted it)
 Which would able be to leave
 That in you which I conceive.

You are cold, and here I may
 Waste my vital heat away,
 Ere you will be moved so much
 As to feel one perfect touch

Of those sweets which, yet concealed,
Swell my breast to be revealed.

Now my words I therefore cease,
That my mounting thoughts, in peace,
May alone those pleasures share
Whereof lines unworthy are.
And so you an end do see
Of my song, though long it be.

No sooner had the shepherd Phil'arete
To this description his last period set,
But instantly, descending from a wood
(Which on a rising ground adjoining stood)
A troop of satyrs, to the view of all,
Came dancing of a new-devised brawl.
The measures they did pace by him were taught
them,
Who, to so rare a gentleness had brought them,
That he had learned their rudeness, and observing
Of such respect unto the well-deserving,
As they became to no men else a terror,
But such as did persist in wilful error ;
And they the ladies made no whit afraid,
Though since that time they some great men have
scared.

Their dance, the "Whipping of Abuse," they
named ;
And though the shepherd, since that, hath been
blamed,
Yet now 'tis daily seen in every town,
And there's no country-dance that's better known ;
Nor that hath gained a greater commendation
'Mongst those that love an honest recreation.

This scene presented, from a grove was heard
A set of viols ; and there was prepared

A country banquet, which this shepherd made,
To entertain the ladies in the shade,
And 'tis supposed his song prolonged was
Of purpose, that it might be brought to pass.
So well it was performed, that each one deemed
The banquet might the city have besemed.
Yet better was their welcome than their fare ;
Which they perceivéd, and the merrier were.

One beauty though there sat amoug the rest,
That looked as sad, as if her heart opprest
With love had been. Whom Phil'arete beholding
Sit so demurely, and her arms enfolding ;

“ Lady,” quoth he, “ am I, or this poor cheer,
The cause that you so melancholy are ?
For if the object of your thoughts be higher,
It fits not me to know them, nor inquire.
But if from me it cometh that offends,
I seek the cause, that I may make amends.”

“ Kind swain,” said she, “ it is nor so, nor so,
No fault in you, nor in your cheer, I know.
Nor do I think there is a thought in me
That can too worthy of your knowledge be.
Nor have I, many a day, more pleasure had
Than here I find, though I have seeméd sad.

“ My heart is sometime heavy when I smile ;
And when I grieve I often sing the while.
Nor is it sadness that doth me possess,
But rather musing, with much seriousness,
Upon that multitude of sighs and tears,
With those innumerable doubts and fears
Through which you passéd, ere you could acquire
A settled hope of gaining your desire.
For you dared love a nymph so great and fair
As might have brought a prince unto despair,
And sure, the excellency of your passions
Did then produce as excellent expressions.

“If, therefore, me the suit may well become,
And if to you it be not wearisome,
In name of all these ladies, I entreat
That one of those sad strains you would repeat
Which you composed when greatest discontent
Unsought-for help to your invention lent.”

“Fair nymph,” said Phil'arete, “I will do so;
For though your shepherd doth no courtship know,
He hath humanity; and what's in me
To do you service, may commanded be.”

So taking down a lute that near him hung,
He gave't his boy, who played, whilst this he
sung:—

Ah me !
 Am I the swain
 That late from sorrow free
 Did all the cares on earth disdain ?
 And still untouched, as at some safer games,
 Played with the burning coals of love, and beauty's flames ?
 Was't I could dive, and sound each passion's secret depth at will ?
 And from those huge o'erwhelmings rise, by help of reason still ?
 And am I now, O heavens ! for trying this in vain,
 So sunk that I shall never rise again ?
 Then let despair set sorrow's string,
 For strains that doleful be ;
 And I will sing,
 Ah me !

But why,
 O fatal time,
 Dost thou constrain that I
 Should perish in my youth's sweet prime ?
 I, but awhile ago, (you cruel powers !)
 In spite of fortune, cropped contentment's sweetest flowers.
 And yet unscornéd, serve a gentle nymph, the fairest she,
 That ever was beloved of man, or eyes did ever see !
 Yea, one whose tender heart would rue for my distress ;
 Yet I, poor I ! must perish ne'ertheless.
 And (which much more augments my care)
 Unmoanéd I must die,
 And no man e'er
 Know why.

Thy leave,
 My dying song,
 Yet take, ere grief bereave
 The breath which I enjoy too long.
 Tell thou that fair one this : my soul prefers
 Her love above my life ; and that I died her's :
 And let him be, for evermore, to her remembrance dear,
 Who loved the very thought of her whilst he remained here.
 And now farewell ! thou place of my unhappy birth,
 Where once I breathed the sweetest air on earth :
 Since me my wonted joys forsake,
 And all my trust deceive ;
 Of all I take
 My leave.

Farewell!
 Sweet groves, to you!
 You hills, that highest dwell;
 And all you humble vales, adieu!
 You wanton brooks, and solitary rocks,
 My dear companions all! and you, my tender flocks!
 Farewell my pipe, and all those pleasing songs, whose moving strains
 Delighted once the fairest nymphs that dance upon the plains!
 You discontents, whose deep and over-deadly smart
 Have, without pity, broke the truest heart)
 Sighs, tears, and every sad annoy,
 That erst did with me dwell,
 And all other joys,
 Farewell!

Adieu!
 Fair shepherdesses!
 Let garlands of sad yew
 Adorn your dainty golden tresses.
 I, that loved you, and often with my quill,
 Made music that delighted fountain, grove, and hill;
 I, whom you loved so, and with a sweet and chaste embrace,
 Yea, with a thousand rather favours) would vouchsafe to grace.
 I now must leave you all alone, of love to plain;
 And never pipe, nor never sing again!
 I must, for evermore, be gone;
 And therefore bid I you,
 And every one,
 Adieu!

I die!!
 For, oh! I feel
 Death's horrors drawing nigh,
 And all this frame of nature reel.
 My hopeless heart, despairing of relief,
 Sinks underneath the heavy weight of saddest grief;
 Which hath so ruthless torn, so racked, so tortured every vein,
 All comfort comes too late to have it ever cured again
 My swimming head begins to dance death's giddy round
 A shuddering chillness doth each sense confound
 Benumbed is my cold sweating brow
 A dimness shuts my eye.
 And now, oh! now,
 I die!!

So mournfully these lines he did express,
And to a tune so full of heaviness,
As if indeed his purpose had been past,
To live no longer than the song did last;
Which in the nymphs such tender passions bred,
That some of them did tears of pity shed.

This, she perceiving who first craved the song;
"Shepherd," she said, "although it be no wrong
Nor grief to you those passions to recall
Which heretofore you have been pained withal,
But comforts rather; since they now are over,
And you, it seemeth, an enjoying lover;
Yet some young nymphs among us I do see,
Who so much mov'd with your passions be
That, if my aim I taken have aright,
Their thoughts will hardly let them sleep to-night.

"I dare not, therefore, beg of you again.
To sing another of the self-same strain,
For fear it breed within them more unrest
Than women's weaknesses can well digest.
Yet in your measures such content you have,
That one song more I will presume to crave.
And if your memory preserves, of those
Which you of your affections did compose
Before you saw this mistress. Let us hear
What kind of passions then within you were."

To which request he instantly obeyed,
And this ensuing song both sung and played.

You gentle nymphs, that on these meadows play,
And oft relate the loves of shepherds young;
Come, sit you down, for if you please to stay,
Now may you hear an uncouth passion sung.
A lad there is, and I am that poor groom,
That's fallen in love, and cannot tell with whom.

Oh ! do not smile at sorrows as a jest ;
With others' cares good natures movéd be ;
And I should weep, if you had my unrest.
Then, at my grief, how can you merry be ?
Ah ! where is tender pity now become ?
I am in love, and cannot tell with whom.

I that have oft the rarest features viewed,
And beauty in her best perfection seen ;
I that have laughed at them that love pursued,
And ever free from such affections been :
Lo ! now, at last, so cruel is my doom—
I am in love, and cannot tell with whom.

My heart is full nigh bursting with desire,
Yet cannot find from whence these longings flow ;
My breast doth burn—but she that lights the fire
I never saw, nor can I come to know.
So great a bliss my fortune keeps me from,
That, though I dearly love, I know not whom.

Ere I had twice four springs renewéd seen,
The force of beauty I began to prove ;
And ere I nine years old had fully been,
It taught me how to frame a song of love,
And little thought I this day should have come,
Before that I to love had found out whom.

For on my chin the mossy down you see,
And in my veins well-heated blood doth glow ;
Of summers I have seen twice three times three,
And fast my youthful time away doth go :
That much I fear I agéd shall become,
And still complain I love I know not whom.

Oh ! why had I a heart bestowed on me,
To cherish dear affections, so inclined ;
Since I am so unhappy born, to be
No object for so true a love to find.
When I am dead, it will be missed of some ;
Yet, now I live—I love, I know not whom.

I to a thousand beauteous nymphs am known ;
A hundred ladies' favours do I wear.
I with as many half in love am grown,
Yet none of them, I find, can be my dear.
Methinks I have a mistress yet to come,
Which makes me sing—I love I know not whom.

There lives no swain doth stronger passion prove,
 For her whom most he covets to possess,
 Than doth my heart, that being full of love,
 Knows not to whom it may the same profess.
 For, he that is despised hath sorrow some ;
 But he hath more—that loves, and knows not whom.

Knew I my love, as many others do,
 To some one object might my thoughts be bent ;
 So they divided should not wandering go,
 Until the soul's united force be spent.
 As his that seeks, and never finds a home :
 Such is my rest—that love, and know not whom.

Those whom the frowns of jealous friends divide,
 May live to meet, and descant on their woe ;
 And he hath gained a lady for his bride,
 That durst not woo her maid awhile ago.
 But oh ! what end unto my hopes can come ?
 That am in love, and cannot tell with whom.

Poor Colin grieves that he was late disdained ;
 And Cloris doth for Willy's absence pine.
 Sad Thyrsis weeps for his sick Phœbe pained,
 But all their sorrows cannot equal mine.
 A greater care, alas ! on me is come—
 I am in love, and cannot tell with whom.

Narcissus-like, did I affect my shade,
 Some shadow yet I had to doat upon ;
 Or did I love some passage of the dead,
 Whose substance had not breathed long ago,
 I might despair, and so an end would come ;
 But oh, I love ! and cannot tell you whom.

Once, in a dream, methought my love I viewed ;
 But never, waking, could her face behold :
 And, doubtless, that resemblance was but shewed,
 That more my tired heart torment it should.
 For since that time more grieved I am become,
 And more in love—I cannot tell with whom.

When on my bed at night to rest I lie,
 My watchful eyes with tears bedew my cheek ;
 And then, "O would it once were day !" I cry :
 Yet when it comes, I am as far to seek.
 For who can tell, though all the earth he roam,
 Or when, or where, to find he knows not whom ?

Oh ! if she be among the beauteous trains
 Of all you nymphs that haunt the silver rills ;
 Or if you know her, ladies of the plains,
 Or you that have your bowers on the hills,
 Tell, if you can, who will my love become ;
 Or I shall die ! and never know for whom.

THE ladies smiled oft when this they heard,
 Because the passion strange to them appeared.
 And stranger was it, since, by his expression
 (As well as by his own unfeigned confession),
 It seeméd true : but having sung it out,
 And seeing scarcely manners they it thought
 To urge him farther ; thus to them he spake :
 Fair ladies ! forasmuch as doubt you make
 To re-command me, of my own accord,
 Another strain I freely will afford.

It shall not be of love, nor any song
 Which to the praise of beauty doth belong ;
 But that hereafter, when you hence are gone,
 Your shepherd may be sometime thought upon.
 To show you also what content the field
 And lovely grove to honest minds may yield.
 That you my humble fate may not despise,
 When you return unto your braveries ;
 And not suppose, that in these homely bowers,
 I hug my fortune, 'cause I know not yours.
 Such lines I'll sing, as were composed by me
 When some proud courtiers, where I happed to be,
 Did, like themselves, of their own glories prate,
 As in contempt of my more happy state.
 And these they be :—

LORDLY gallants ! tell me this
 (Though my safe content you weigh not),
 In your greatness, what one bliss
 Have you gained, that I enjoy not ?

You have honours, you have wealth ;
I have peace, and I have health :
All the day I merry make,
And at night no care I take.

Bound to none my fortunes be,
This or that man's fall I fear not ;
Him I love that loveth me,
For the rest a pin I care not.
You are sad when others chafe,
And grow merry as they laugh ;
I that hate it, and am free,
Laugh and weep as pleaseth me.

You may boast of favours shown,
Where your service is applied ;
But my pleasures are mine own,
And to no man's humour tied.
You oft flatter, sooth, and feign ;
I such baseness do disdain ;
And to none be slave I would,
Though my fetters might be gold.

By great titles, some believe,
Highest honours are attained ;
And yet kings have power to give
To their fools, what these have gained.
Where they favour there they may
All their names of honour lay ;
But I look not raised to be,
'Till mine own wing carry me.

Seek to raise your titles higher ;
They are toys not worth my sorrow :
Those that we to-day admire,
Prove the age's scorn to-morrow.
Take your honours ; let me find
Virtue in a free-born mind—
This, the greatest kings that be
Cannot give, nor take from me.

Though I vainly do not vaunt
Large demesnes, to feed my pleasure ;
I have favours where you want,
That would buy respect with treasure.
You have lands lie here and there,
But my wealth is everywhere ;
And this addeth to my store—
Fortune cannot make me poor.

Say you purchase with your pelf
Some respect, where you importune ;
Those may love me for myself,
That regard you for your fortune.
Rich or born of high degree,
Fools as well as you may be ;
But that peace in which I live
No descent nor wealth can give.

If you boast that you may gain
The respect of high-born beauties ;
Know I never wooed in vain,
Nor preferred scornéd duties.
She I love hath all delight,
Rosy-red with lily-white,
And whoe'er your mistress be,
Flesh and blood as good as she.

Note of me was never took,
For my woman-like perfections ;
But so like a man I look,
It hath gained me best affections.
For my love as many showers
Have been wept as have for yours :
And yet none doth me condemn
For abuse, or scorning them.

Though of dainties you have store,
To delight a choicer palate,
Yet your taste is pleased no more
Than is mine in one poor sallet.
You to please your senses feed,
But I eat good blood to breed ;
And am most delighted than
When I spend it like a man.

Though you lord it over me,
You in vain thereof have braved ;
For those lusts my servants be
Whereunto your minds are slaved.
To yourselves you wise appear,
But, alas ! deceived you are ;
You do foolish me esteem,
And are that which I do seem.

When your faults I open lay,
You are moved, and mad with vexing ;
But you ne'er could do or say
Aught to drive me to perplexing.

Therefore, my despised power
Greater is, by far, than your.
And, whate'er you think of me,
In your minds you poorer be.

You are pleaséd, more or less,
As men well or ill report you ;
And show discontentedness,
When the times forbear to court you.
That in which my pleasures be,
No man can divide from me ;
And my care it adds not to,
Whatso others say or do.

Be not proud, because you view
You by thousands are attended ;
For, alas ! it is not you,
But your fortune that's befriended.
Where I show of love have got,
Such a danger fear I not :
Since they nought can seek of me,
But for love, beloved to be.

When your hearts have everything,
You are pleasantly disposed :
But I can both laugh and sing,
Though my foes have me enclosed.
Yea, when dangers me do hem,
I delight in scorning them,
More than you in your renown,
Or a king can in his crown.

You do bravely domineer,
Whilst the sun upon you shineth :
Yet, if any storm appear,
Basely, then, your mind declineth.
But, or shine, or rain, or blow,
I my resolutions know—
Living, dying, thrall, or free,
At one height my mind shall be.

When in thraldom I have lain,
Me not worth your thought you prized ;
But your malice was in vain,
For your favours I despised.
And, howe'er you value me,
I with praise shall thought on be
When the world esteems you not
And your names shall be forgot.

In these thoughts my riches are ;
Now, though poor or mean you deem me,
I am pleased, and do not care
How the times or you esteem me.
For those toys that make you gay
Are but play-games for a day :
And when nature craves her due,
I as brave shall be as you.

HERE Phil'arete did give his song an ending,
To which the nymphs, so seriously attending,
About him sate, as if they had supposed
He still had somewhat more to be disclosed.
And well they knew not whether did belong
Most praise unto the shepherd or his song.
For though, they must confess, they often hear
Those lays which much more deeply learned are,
Yet, when they well considered of the place,
With how unlikely, in their thought, it was
To give them hope of hearing such a strain ;
Or that so young and so obscure a swain
Should such a matchless beauty's favour get,
And know her worth so well, to sing of it ;
They wondered at it. And some thus surmised,
That he a greater man was so disguised ;
Or else that she whom he so much had praised
Some goddess was : that those his measures raised
Of purpose, to that rare-attained height,
In envy's and presuming art's despite.

But, whilst they musing with themselves be-
thought
Which way out of this shepherd to have wrought
What nymph this fair one was, and where she
lived—
Lo ! at that very instant there arrived
Three men, that by their habits courtiers seemed ;
For, though obscure, by some he is esteemed

Among the greatest ; who do not contemn
In his retiréd walks to visit him.
And there they taste those pleasures of the mind,
Which they can nor in court nor city find.
Some news or message these new guests had
brought him,
And to make haste away, it seems, besought
him ;
For instantly he rose—and that his nurture
Might not be taxéd by a rude departure,
Himself excusing, he those nymphs did pray,
His noble friends might bring them on their way,
Who, as it seems (he said) were therefore come,
That they might wait upon them to their home.
So, with their favour, he departed thence :
And, as they thought, to meet her Excellence,
Of whom he sung. Yet many deem that this,
But an idea of a MISTRESS is.
Because to none he yet had deigned the telling
Her proper name, nor shown her place of dwelling.

When he was gone, a lady from among
Those nymphs, took up his lute, and sung this
song :—

THE NYMPH'S SONG.

GENTLE swain, good speed befall thee ;
And in love still prosper thou !
Future times shall happy call thee,
Though thou lie neglected now.
Virtue's lovers shall commend thee,
And perpetual fame attend thee.

Happy are these woody mountains
In whose shadows thou dost hide ;
And as happy are those fountains
By whose murmurs thou dost bide.
For contents are here excelling
More than in a prince's dwelling.

These thy flocks do clothing bring thee,
And thy food out of the fields ;
Pretty songs the birds do sing thee ;
Sweet perfumes the meadow yields ;
And what more is worth the seeing,
Heaven and earth thy prospect being ?

None comes hither who denies thee
Thy contentments for despite ;
Neither any that envies thee,
That wherein thou dost delight :
But all happy things are meant thee,
And whatever may content thee.

Thy affection reason measures,
And distempers none it feeds :
Still so harmless are thy pleasures,
That no other's grief it breeds ;
And if night beget thee sorrow,
Seldom stays it till the morrow.

Why do foolish men so vainly
Seek contentment in their store ;
Since they may perceive so plainly,
Thou art rich in being poor ;
And that they are vexed about it,
Whilst thou merry art without it.

Why are idle brains devising
How high titles may be gained ;
Since by those poor toys despising,
Thou hast higher things obtained ;
For the man who scorns to crave them,
Greater is than they that have them.

If all men could taste that sweetness
Thou dost in thy meanness know,
Kings would be to seek where greatness
And their honours to bestow ;
For it such content would breed them
As they would not think they need them.

And if those who so aspiring
To the court preferments be,
Knew how worthy the desiring
Those things are enjoyed by thee ;
Wealth and titles would hereafter
Subjects be for scorn and laughter.

He that courtly styles affected
Should a May-Lord's honour have ;
He that heaps of wealth collected
Should be counted as a slave ;
And the man with few'st things cumbered,
With the noblest should be numbered.

Thou their folly hast discernéd,
That neglect thy mind and thee ;
And to slight them thou hast learnéd,
Of what title e'er they be ;
That no more with thee obtaineth,
Than with them thy meanness gaineth.

All their riches, honours, pleasures,
Poor unworthy trifles seem,
If comparéd with thy treasures,
And do merit no esteem ;
For they true contents provide thee,
And from them can none divide thee.

Whether thralléd or exiléd,
Whether poor or rich thou be ;
Whether praised or reviléd,
Not a rush it is to thee ;
This nor that thy rest doth win thee,
But the mind which is within thee.

Then, oh why, so madly dote we
On those things that us o'erload ?
Why no more their vainness note we,
But still make of them a God ?
For, alas ! they still deceive us,
And in greatest need they leave us.

Therefore have the fates provided
Well, thou happy swain, for thee ;
That may'st here, so far divided
From the world's distractions be.
Thee distemper let them never,
But in peace continue ever.

In these lonely groves enjoy thou
That contentment here begun ;
And thy hours so pleased employ thou,
Till the latest glass be run.
From a fortune so assuréd,
By no temptings be aliuréd.

Much good do't them with their glories
Who in courts of princes dwell ;
We have read in antique stories,
How some rose and how they fell.
And 'tis worthy well the heeding,
There's like end where's like proceeding.

Be thou still in thy affection
To thy noble mistress true ;
Let her never-matched perfection
Be the same unto thy view ;
And let never other beauty
Make thee fail in love or duty.

For if thou shalt not estrangéd
From thy course professéd be ;
But remain for aye unchangéd,
Nothing shall have power on thee.
Those that slight thee now shall love thee,
And in spite of spite approve thee.

So those virtues now neglected
To be more esteemed will come ;
Yea, those toys so much affected,
Many shall be wooéd from ;
And the golden age deploréd
Shall by some be thought restoréd.

THUS sang the nymph, so rarely well inspired,
That all the hearers her brave strains admired :
And as I heard by some that there attended,
When this her song was finished, all was ended.

A POSTSCRIPT.

IF any carp, for that my younger times
 Brought forth such idle fruit as these slight rhymes ;
 It is no matter, so they do not swear
 That they so ill employéd never were.
 Whilst their desires, perhaps, they looselier spent,
 I gave my heats of youth this better vent,
 And oft by writing thus the blood have tamed,
 Which some with reading wanton lays enflamed.
 Nor care I though their censure some have past,
 Because my songs exceed the fiddler's last ;
 For do they think that I will make my measures
 The longer or the shorter for their pleasures ?
 Or maim or curtailise my free invention,
 Because fools weary are of their attention :—
 No, let them know, who do their length contemn,
 I make to please myself, and not for them.



A Christmas Carol.

So now is come our joyful feast,
Let every man be jolly ;
Each room with ivy leaves is drest,
And every post with holly.
Though some churls at our mirth repine,
Round your foreheads garlands twine,
Drown sorrow in a cup of wine,
And let us all be merry.

Now all our neighbours' chimnies smoke,
And Christmas blocks are burning ;
Their ovens they with baked meats choke,
And all their spits are turning.
Without the door let sorrow lie,
And if for cold it hap to die,
We'll bury it in a Christmas pie ;
And evermore be merry.

Now every lad is wondrous trim,
And no man minds his labour ;
Our lasses have provided them
A bagpipe and a tabour.
Young men and maids, and girls and boys
Give life to one another's joys ;
And you anon shall by their noise
Perceive that they are merry.

Rank misers now do sparing shun,
Their hall of music soundeth ;
And dogs thence with whole shoulders run,
So all things there aboundeth.

The country-folk themselves advance,
For Crowdy-Mutton's come out of France ;
And Jack shall pipe and Jill shall dance,
And all the town be merry.

Ned Swatch hath fetched his bands from pawn,
And all his best apparel ;
Brisk Nell hath bought a ruff of lawn
With droppings of the barrel.
And those that hardly all the year
Had bread to eat or rags to wear,
Will have both clothes and dainty fare,
And all the day be merry.

Now poor men to the justices
With capons make their errands ;
And if they hap to fail of these,
They plague them with their warrants.
But now they feed them with good cheer,
And what they want they take in beer,
For Christmas comes but once a year,
And then they shall be merry.

Good farmers in the country nurse
The poor, that else were undone ;
Some landlords spend their money worse,
On lust and pride at London.
There the roysters they do play,
Drab and dice their land away,
Which may be ours another day ;
And therefore let 's be merry.

The client now his suit forbears,
The prisoner's heart is easéd ;
The debtor drinks away his cares,
And for the time is pleaséd.
Though others' purses be more fat,
Why should we pine or grieve at that ;
Hang sorrow, care will kill a cat,
And therefore let 's be merry.

Hark how the wags abroad do call
Each other forth to rambling ;
Anon you'll see them in the hall,
For nuts and apples scrambling.
Hark how the roofs with laughters sound,
Anon they'll think the house goes round ;
For they the cellar's depths have found,
And there they will be merry.

The wenches with their wassel-bowls
About the streets are singing ;
The boys are come to catch the owls,
The wild mare in is bringing.
Our kitchen boy hath broke his box,
And to the dealing of the ox
Our honest neighbours come by flocks,
And here they will be merry.

Now kings and queens poor sheep-cotes have,
And mate with everybody ;
The honest now may play the knave,
And wise men play at noddy.
Some youths will now a mumming go,
Some others play at rowland-hoe,
And twenty other gameboys moe ;
Because they will be merry.

Then wherefore in these merry days
Should we, I pray, be duller ?
No, let us sing some roundelays
To make our mirth the fuller.
And whilst we thus inspiréd sing,
Let all the streets with echoes ring ;
Woods, and hills, and everything
Bear witness we are merry.

A Sonnet upon a Stolen Kiss.

Now gentle sleep hath closed up those eyes,
Which waking kept my boldest thoughts in awe ;
And free access unto that sweet lip lies,
From whence I long the rosy breath to draw.
Methinks no wrong it were if I should steal
From those two melting rubies one poor kiss :
None sees the theft that would the thief reveal,
Nor rob I her of aught which she can miss.
Nay, should I twenty kisses take away,
There would be little sign I had done so ;
Why, then, should I this robbery delay ?
Oh, she may wake, and therewith angry grow.
Well, if she do, I'll back restore that one,
And twenty hundred thousand more for loan.



A Ballad.

Now, young man, thy days and thy glories appear
Like sunshine and blossoms in spring of the year ;
Thy vigour of body, thy spirits, thy wit
Are perfect, and sound, and untroubled yet :
Now then, oh now then, if safety thou love,
Mind thou, oh mind thou, thy Maker above.

Misspend not a morning so excellent clear ;
Never, for ever, was happiness here.
Thy noontide of life hath but little delight,
And sorrows on sorrows will follow at night :
Now then, oh now then, if safety thou love,
Mind thou, oh mind thou, thy Maker above.

That strength and those beauties that grace thee
to-day,
To-morrow may perish and vanish away ;
Thy wealth, or thy pleasures, or friends that now be
May waste, or deceive, or be traitors to thee :
Now then, oh now then, if safety thou love,
Mind thou, oh mind thou, thy Maker above.

Thy joints are yet nimble, thy sinews unslack,
And marrow unwasted doth strengthen thy back ;
Thy youth from diseases preserveth the brain,
And blood with free passage plumps every vein :
Now then, oh now then, if safety thou love,
Mind thou, oh mind thou, thy Maker above.

But trust me, it will not for ever be so ;
Those arms that are mighty shall feebler grow,

And those legs so proudly supporting thee now,
With age or diseases will stagger and bow :

Now then, oh now then, if safety thou love,
Mind thou, oh mind thou, thy Maker above.

Then all those rare features now graceful in thee
Shall ploughed with time's furrows quite ruinéd be ;
And they who admiréd and loved thee so much,
Shall loath or forget thou hadst ever been such :

Now then, oh now then, if safety thou love,
Mind thou, oh mind thou, thy Maker above.

Those tresses of hair which thy youth do adorn,
Will look like the meads in a winterly morn ;
And where red and white intermixéd did grow,
Dull paleness a deadly complexion will show :

Now then, oh now then, if safety thou love,
Mind thou, oh mind thou, thy Maker above.

That forehead imperious whereon we now view
A smoothness and whiteness enamelled with blue,
Will lose that perfection which now youth main-
tains,

And change it for hollowness, wrinkles, and stains :

Now then, oh now then, if safety thou love,
Mind thou, oh mind thou, thy Maker above.

Those ears thou with music didst oft entertain,
And charm with so many a delicate strain,
May miss of those pleasures wherewith they are fed
And never hear song more when youth is once fled :

Now then, oh now then, if safety thou love,
Mind thou, oh mind thou, thy Maker above.

Those eyes which so many so much did admire,
And with strange affections set thousands on fire,
Shut up in that darkness which age will constrain,
Shall never see mortal, no, never again :

Now then, oh now then, if safety thou love,
Mind thou, oh mind thou, thy Maker above.

Those lips whereon beauty so fully diseloses
The colour and sweetness of rubies and roses,
Instead of that hue will ghastliness wear,
And none shall believe what perfection was there :
Now then, oh now then, if safety thou love,
Mind thou, oh mind thou, thy Maker above.

Thy teeth that stood firmly like pearls in a row,
Shall, rotten and scattered, disorderly grow ;
The mouth whose proportion earth's wonder was
thought,
Shall, robbed of that sweetness, be prizéd at nought :
Now then, oh now then, if safety thou love,
Mind thou, oh mind thou, thy Maker above.

That gait and those gestures that win thee such
grace,
Will turn to a feeble and staggering pæce ;
And thou, that o'er mountains rann'st nimbly to-day,
Shalt stumble at every rub in the way :
Now then, oh now then, if safety thou love,
Mind thou, oh mind thou, thy Maker above.

By these imperfections old age will prevail,
Thy marrow, thy sinews, and spirits will fail ;
And nothing is left thee, when those are once spent,
To give or thyself or another content :
Now then, oh now then, if safety thou love,
Mind thou, oh mind thou, thy Maker above.

Those fancies that lull thee with dreams of delight
Will trouble thy quiet the comfortless night ;
And thou that now sleepest thy troubles away,
Shalt hear how each cockrel gives warning of day :
Now then, oh now then, if safety thou love,
Mind thou, oh mind thou, thy Maker above.

Then thou that to-day art to thousands so dear,
Of all shall despised, or neglected appear ;

Which when thou perceiv'st, though now pleasant
it be,

Thy life will be grievous and loathsome to thee :

Now then, oh now then, if safety thou love,

Mind thou, oh mind thou, thy Maker above.

That lust which thy youth can so hardly forego,

Will leave thee—and leave thee repentance and woe ;

And then in thy folly no joy thou canst have,

Nor hope other rest than a comfortless grave :

Now then, oh now then, if safety thou love,

Mind thou, oh mind thou, thy Maker above.

For next shall thy breath be quite taken away,

Thy flesh turned to dust, and that dust turned to
clay ;

And those thou hast loved and shared of thy store,

Shall leave thee, forget thee, and mind thee no more :

Now then, oh now then, if safety thou love,

Mind thou, oh mind thou, thy Maker above.

And yet if in time thou remember not this,

The slenderest part of thy sorrow it is ;

Thy soul to a torture more fearful shall wend

Hath ever, and ever, and never an end :

Now then, oh now then, if safety thou love,

Mind thou, oh mind thou, thy Maker above.



A Dream.

WHEN bright Phœbus at his rest
Was reposéd in the west,
And the cheerful daylight gone
Drew unwelcome darkness on ;
 Night her blackness wrought about me,
 And within 'twas as without me.

Therefore on my tumbled bed
Down I laid my troubled head ;
Where mine eyes inured to care
Seldom used to slumbering were ;
 Yet, o'er tired of late with weeping,
 Then by chance they fell a sleeping.

But such visions me diseased,
As in vain that sleep I seized ;
For I sleeping fancies had,
Which yet waking make me sad.
 Some can sleep away their sorrow,
 But mine doubles every morrow.

Walking to a pleasant grove,
Where I used to think of love ;
I methought a place did view,
Wherein Flora's riches grew ;
 Primrose, hyacinth, and lilies
 Cowslips, violets, daffodilies :

There a fountain close beside
I a matchless beauty spied ;

So she lay, as if she slept,
But much grief her waking kept ;
And she had no softer pillow
Than the hard root of a willow.

Down her cheeks the tears did flow
Which a grievéd heart did show ;
Her fair eyes the earth beholding,
And her arms themselves enfolding,
She her passion to betoken
Sighed, as if her heart were broken.

So much grief methought she showed,
That my sorrow it renewed ;
But when nearer her I went,
It increased my discontent ;
For a gentle nymph she proved,
Who me long unknown had loved.

Straight on me she fixed her look
Which a deep impression took ;
“ And of all that live,” quoth she,
“ Thou art welcomest to me.”
Then misdoubting to be blamed,
Thus she spake as half ashamed :

“ Thee unknown I long affected,
And as long in vain expected ;
For I had a hopeful thought,
Thou would'st crave what others sought ;
And I, for thy sake, have staid
Many wanton springs a maid.

“ Still when any wooéd me,
They renewed the thought of thee ;
And in hope thou would'st have tried,
Their affections I denied ;
But a lover, forced upon me
By my friends, hath now undone me.

“What I waking dared not show,
In a dream thou now dost know ;
But to better my estate,
Now, alas, it is too late ;
 And I both awake and sleeping,
 Now consume my youth in weeping.”

Somewhat then I would have said,
But replyings were denied ;
For methought when speak I would,
Not a word bring forth I could ;
 And as I a kiss was taking,
 That I lost too by awaking.





THE
SHEPHERD'S
HUNTING.

Being certain Eclogues written
during the time of the Author's
Imprisonment in the
Marshalsea.

THE
SOCIETY OF THE
SIX



OF THE
SOCIETY OF THE
SIX

The Shepherd's Hunting.



THE FIRST ECLOGUE

THE ARGUMENT.

*Willy leaves his flock awhile,
To lament his friend's exile ;
Where, though prisoned, he doth find
He's still free that's free in mind ;
And that there is no defence
Half so firm as innocence.*

PHILARETE. WILLY.

Philarete.

WILLY ! thou now full jolly tun'st thy reeds,
Making the nymphs enamoured on thy strains ;
And whilst thy harmless flock unscaréd feeds,
Hast the contentment of hills, groves, and plains
Trust me, I joy thou and thy muse so speeds
In such an age, where so much mischief reigns ;
And to my care it some redress will be
Fortune hath so much grace to smile on thee.

Willy.

To smile on me ? I ne'er yet knew her smile,
Unless 'twere when she purposed to deceive me :
Many a train and many a painted wile
She casts, in hope of freedom to bereave me ;
Yet now, because she sees I scorn her guile,
To fawn on fools she for my Muse doth leave me ;
And here of late, her wonted spite doth tend
To work me care by frowning on my friend.

Philarete.

Why then I see her copper coin's no sterling,
 'Twill not be current still, for all the gilding.
 A knave or fool must ever be her darling,
 For they have minds to all occasions yielding.
 If we get anything by all our parling,
 It seems an apple, but it proves a wilding.

But let that pass. Sweet shepherd, tell me this,
 For what belovéd friend thy sorrow is.

Willy.

Art thou, Philareté, in durance here,
 And dost thou ask me for what friend I grieve?
 Can I suppose thy love to me is dear,
 Or this thy joy for my content believe,
 When thou think'st thy cares touch not me as near,
 Or that I pin thy sorrows at my sleeve?

I have in thee reposéd so much trust,
 I never thought to find thee so unjust.

Philarete.

Why, Willy?

Willy.

Prithee, do not ask me why.

Doth it diminish any of thy care,
 That I in freedom maken melody?
 And think'st I cannot as well somewhat spare
 From my delight to moan thy misery?

'Tis time our loves should these suspects forbear:

Thou art that friend, which thou, unnamed,
 should'st know,

And not have drawn my love in question so.

Philarete.

Forgive me, and I'll pardon thy mistake;
 And so let this thy gentle anger cease.
 I never of thy love will question make
 Whilst that the number of our days increase.

Yet to myself I much might seem to take,
And something near unto presumption prease,
To think me worthy love from such a spirit,
But that I know thy kindness past my merit.

Besides, methought thou spak'st now of a
friend,
That seemed more grievous discontents to bear :
Some things I find that do in show offend,
Which to my patience little trouble are ;
And they ere long I hope will have an end,
Or though they have not, much I do not care.
So this it was made me that question move,
And not suspect of honest Willy's love.

Willy.

Alas ! thou art exiled from thy flock,
And quite beyond the deserts here confined,
Hast nothing to converse with but a rock,
Or at least outlaws in their caves half pined ;
And dos' thou at thy own misfortune mock,
Making thyself, too, to thyself unkind ?
When heretofore we talked we did embrace,
But now I scarce can come to see thy face.

Philarete.

Yet all that, Willy, is not worth thy sorrow,
For I have mirth here thou would'st not believe :
From deepest cares the highest joys I borrow.
If aught chance out this day may inake me
grieve,
I'll learn to mend or scorn it by to-morrow.
This barren place yields somewhat to relieve,
For I have found sufficient to content me,
And more true bliss than ever freedom lent
me.

Willy.

Are prisons then grown places of delight ?

Philarete.

'Tis as the conscience of the prisoner is :
'The very grates are able to affright
'The guilty man that knows his deeds amiss ;
All outward pleasures are exiléd quite,
And it is nothing of itself but this :
 Abhorred liveness, darkness, sadness, pains,
 Numb cold, sharp hunger, scorching thirst,
 and chains.

Willy.

And these are nothing ?

Philarete.

 Nothing yet to me :
Only my friend's restraint is all my pain ;
And since I truly find my conscience free
From that my liveness too, I reap some gain.

Willy.

But grant in this no discontentment be,
It doth thy wished liberty restrain ;
 And to thy soul I think there's nothing nearer,
 For I could never hear thee prize aught dearer.

Philarete.

True, I did ever set it at a rate
'Too dear for any mortal's worth to buy ;
'Tis not our greatest shepherd's whole estate
Shall purchase from me my least liberty ;
But I am subject to the powers of fate,
And to obey them is no slavery :
 They may do much, but when they have done
 all,
 Only my body they may bring in thrall.

And 'tis not that, my Willy ! 'tis my mind ;
My mind's more precious freedom I so weigh.
A thousand ways they may my body bind,
In thousand thralls, but ne'er my mind betray ;

And thence it is that I contentment find,
And bear with patience this my load away :
I'm still myself, and that I'd rather be,
'Than to be lord of all these downs in fee.

Willy.

Nobly resolved ! and I do joy to hear 't ;
For 'tis the mind of man indeed that's ail ;
'There's nought so hard but a brave heart will bear 't ;
'The guiltless men count great afflictions small :
'They'll look on death and torment, yet not fear 't,
Because they know 'tis rising, so to fall.

Tyrants may boast they to much power are born,
Yet he hath more that tyrannies can scorn.

Philarete.

'Tis right ; but I no tyrannies endure,
Nor have I suffered aught worth name of care.

Willy.

Whate'er thou'lt call 't thou may'st, but I am sure
Many more pine that much less pained are.
Thy look, methinks, doth say thy meaning's pure,
And by this past I find what thou dost dare ;
But I could never yet the reason know,
Why thou art lodged in this house of woe.

Philarete.

Nor I, by Pan ! nor never hope to do ;
But thus it pleases some, and I do guess
Partly a cause that moves them thereunto,
Which neither will avail me to express,
Nor thee to hear, and therefore let it go :
We must not say they do so that oppress ;
Yet I shall ne'er, to sooth them or the times,
Injure myself by bearing others' crimes.

Willy.

'Then thou may'st speak freely : there's none hears
But he whom, I do hope, thou dost not doubt.

Philarete.

True ; but if doors and walls have gotten ears,
And closet-whisperings may be spread about,
Do not blame him that in such causes fears
What in his passion he may blunder out
 In such a place, and such strict times as these,
 Where what we speak is took as others please.

But yet to-morrow, if thou come this way,
I'll tell thee all my story to the end :
'Tis long, and now I fear thou canst not stay,
Because thy stock must watered be and penned
And night begins to muffle up the day ;
Whence to inform thee how alone I spend,
I'll only sing a sorry prisoner's lay
 I framed this morn ; which, though it suits no
 fields,
 Is such as fits me and sad thralldom yields.

Willy.

Well, I will set my kit another string,
And play into it whilst that thou dost sing.

Sonnet.

Philarete.

Now that my body, dead-alive,
Bereaved of comfort, lies in thrall,
Do thou, my soul, begin to thrive,
And unto honey turn this gall ;
 So shall we both, through outward woe,
 The way to inward comfort know.

As to the flesh we food do give
To keep in us this mortal breath ;
So souls on meditations live,
And shun thereby immortal death ;
 Nor art thou ever nearer rest,
 Than when thou find'st me most opprest.

First, think, my soul, if I have foes
That take a pleasure in my care,
And to procure these outward woes
Have thus entrapt me unaware,
Thou should'st by much more careful be,
Since greater foes lay wait for thee.

Then, when mowed up in grates of steel,
Minding those joys mine eyes do miss,
Thou find'st no torment thou dost feel
So grievous as privation is ;
Muse how the damned, in flames that glow,
Pine in the loss of bliss they know.

Thou seest there's given so great might
To some that are but clay as I,
Their very anger can affright ;
Which, if in any thou espy,
Thus think : if mortal's frowns strike fear,
How dreadful will God's wrath appear !

By my late hopes, that now are crost,
Consider those that firmer be ;
And make the freedom I have lost
A means that may remember Thee :
Had Christ not thy Redecmer been,
What horrid thrall thou hadst been in !

These iron chains, these bolts of steel,
Which other poor offenders grind,
The wants and cares which they do feel,
May bring some greater thing to mind ;
For by their grief thou shalt do well
To think upon the pains of hell.

Or when through me thou seest a man
Condemned unto a mortal death,
How sad he looks, how pale, how wan,
Drawing with fear his panting breath ;
Think, if in that such grief thou see,
How sad will, " Go, ye curséd !" be.

Again, when he that feared to die,
Past hope, doth see his pardon brought,
Read but the joy that's in his eye,
And then convey it to thy thought ;
There think, betwixt my heart and thee,
How sweet will " Come, ye blessed !" be.

'Thus if thou do, though closéd here,
My bondage I shall deem the less,
I neither shall have cause to fear,
Nor yet bewail my sad distress ;
For whether live, or pine, or die,
We shall have bliss eternally.

Willy.

Trust me, I see the cage doth some birds good ;
And, if they do not suffer too much wrong,
Will teach them sweeter descants than the wood.
Believe 't, I like the subject of thy song :
It shows thou art in no distempered mood ;
But 'cause to hear the residue I long,
My sheep to-morrow I will nearer bring,
And spend the day to hear thee talk and sing.

Yet ere we part, Philareté, areed
Of whom thou learn'dst to make such songs as
these.

I never yet heard any shepherd's reed
Tune in mishap a strain that more could please.
Surely thou dost invoke, at this thy need,
Some power that we neglect in other lays ;
For here's a name and words that but few
swains
Have mentioned at their meeting on the plains.

Philarete.

Indeed, 'tis true ; and they are sore to blame
That do so much neglect it in their songs ;
For thence proceedeth such a worthy fame
As is not subject unto envy's wrongs ;
That is the most to be respected name
Of our true Pan, whose worth sits on all tongues,
And what the ancient shepherds used to praise
In sacred anthems upon holidays.

He that first taught his music such a strain
Was that sweet shepherd who, until a king,
Kept sheep upon the honey-milky plain,
That is enriched by Jordan's watering :
He in his troubles eased the body's pains
By measures raised to the soul's ravishing ;
And his sweet numbers only, most divine,
Gave first the being to this song of mine.

Willy.

Let his good spirit ever with thee dwell,
That I might hear such music every day !

Philarete.

Thanks, swain ! But hark, thy wether rings his bell,
And swains to fold or homeward drive away.

Willy.

And yon goes Cuddy ; therefore fare thou well !
I'll make his sheep for me a little stay ;
And, if thou think it fit, I'll bring him too
Next morning hither.

Philarete.

Prithee, Willy, do.

THE SECOND ECLOGUE.

THE ARGUMENT.

*Cuddy here relates, how all
Pity Philareté's thrall ;
Who, requested, doth relate
The true cause of his estate ;
Which broke off, because 'twas long,
They begin a three-man song.*

WILLY. CUDDY. PHILARETE.

Willy.

LO, Philarete ! thy old friend here and I,
Are come to visit thee in these thy bands,
Whilst both our flocks, in an enclosure by,
Do pick the thin grass from the fallowed lands.
He tells me thy restraint of liberty
Each one throughout the country understands ;
And there is not a gentle-natured lad
On all these downs, but for thy sake is sad.

Cuddy.

Not thy acquaintance and thy friends alone
Pity thy close restraint, as friends should do ;
But some that have but seen thee, for thee moan ;
Yea, many that did never see thee, too.
Some deem thee in a fault, and most in none ;
So divers ways do divers rumours go ;
And at all meetings where our shepherds be,
Now the main news that's extant, is of thee.

Philarete.

Why, this is somewhat yet. Had I but kept
Sheep on the mountains till the day of doom,
My name should in obscurity have slept
In brakes, in briars, shrubbéd furze and broom :
Into the world's wide ear it had not crept,
Nor in so many men's thoughts found a room.
But what cause of my sufferings do they know ?
Good Cuddy, tell me, how doth rumour go ?

Cuddy.

'Faith ! 'tis uncertain : some speak this, some that ;
Some dare say nought, yet seem to think a cause,
And many an one, prating he knows not what,
Comes out with proverbs and old ancient saws,
As if he thought thee guiltless, and yet not ;
Then doth he speak half sentences, then pause,
That what the most would say we may suppose ;
But what to say the rumour is, none knows.

Philarete.

Nor care I greatly ; for it skills not much
What the unsteady common people deems :
His conscience doth not always feel least touch
That blameless in the sight of others seems.
My cause is honest, and because 'tis such,
I hold it so, and not for men's esteems.

If they speak justly well of me, I'm glad ;
If falsely evil, it ne'er makes me sad.

Willy.

I like that mind ; but, shepherd, you are quite
Beside the matter that I long to hear :
Remember what you promised yester-night ;
You'd put us off with other talk, I fear.
'Thou know'st that honest Cuddy's heart's upright,
And none but he, except myself, is near ;
Come, therefore, and betwixt us two relate
The true occasion of thy present state.

Philarete.

My Friends, I will. You know I am a swain
'That kept a poor flock on a barren plain ;
Who, though it seems I could do nothing less,
Can make a song, and woo a shepherdess ;
And not alone the fairest where I live
Have heard me sing, and favours deigned to give ;
But, though I say 't, the noblest nymph of Thame
Hath graced my verse, unto my greater fame.
Yet, being young, and not much seeking praise,
I was not noted out for shepherd's lays,
Nor feeding flocks, as you know others be ;
For the delight that most possesséd me
Was hunting foxes, wolves, and beasts of prey,
That spoil our folds, and bear our lambs away.
For this, as also for the love I bear
Unto my country, I laid by all care
Of gain, or of preferment, with desire
Only to keep that state I had entire,

And like a true grown huntsman sought to speed
Myself with hounds of rare and choicest breed,
Whose names and natures, ere I further go,
Because you are my friends, I'll let you know.
My first esteeméd dog that I did find
Was by descent of old Acteon's kind ;
A brache which, if I do not aim amiss,
For all the world is just like one of his :
She's naméd Love,* and scarce yet knows her duty ;
Her dam's my lady's pretty beagle, Beauty.
I bred her up myself with wondrous charge,
Until she grew to be exceeding large,
And waxed so wanton, that I did abhor it,
And put her out amongst my neighbours for it.
The next is Lust, a hound that's kept abroad
'Mongst some of mine acquaintance, but a toad
Is not more loathsome : 'tis a cur will range
Extremely, and is ever full of mange ;
And cause it is infectious, she's not wont
To come among the rest, but when they hunt.
Hate is the third, a hound both deep and long ;
His sire is True, or else supposed Wrong.
He'll have a snap at all that pass him by,
And yet pursues his game most eagerly.
With him goes Envy coupled, a lean cur,
And yet she'll hold out, hunt we ne'er so far :
She pineth much, and feedeth little too,
Yet stands and snarleth at the rest that do.
Then there's Revenge, a wondrous deep-mouthed
dog,
So fleet, I'm fain to hunt him with a clog ;
Yet many times he'll much outstrip his bounds,
And hunts not closely with the other hounds :
He'll venture on a lion in his ire.
Curst Choler was his dam, and Wrong his sire.
This Choler is a brache that's very old,
And spends her mouth too much to have it hold :

* The different passions here enumerated are those which Wither has personified in his "Abuses Stript and Whipt."

She's very testy, an displeasing cur,
That bites the very stones if they but stir ;
Or when that aught but her displeasure moves,
She'll bite and snap at any one she loves.
But my quick scented'st dog is Jealousy ;
The truest of this breed's in Italy.
The dam of mine would hardly fill a glove,
It was a lady's little dog, called Love ;
The sire, a poor deforméd cur, named Fear,
As shaggéd and as rough as is a bear ;
And yet the whelp turned after neither kind,
For he is very large, and near-hand blind.
Far off he seemeth of a pretty colour,
But doth not prove so when you view him fuller ;
A vile, suspicious beast, whose looks are bad,
And I do fear in time he will grow mad.
To him I couple Avarice, still poor,
Yet she devours as much as twenty more :
A thousand horse she in her paunch can put,
Yet whine as if she had an empty gut ;
And having gorged what might a land have found,
She'll catch for more, and hide it in the ground.
Ambition is a hound as greedy full ;
But he for all the daintiest bits doth cull :
He scorns to lick up crumbs beneath the table :
He'll fetch 't from boards and shelves, if he be
able ;
Nay, he can climb, if need be, and for that
With him I hunt the martin and the cat ;
And yet sometimes in mounting he's so quick,
He fetches falls are like to break his neck.
Fear is well-mouthed, but subject to distrust :
A stranger cannot make him take a crust ;
A little thing will soon his courage quail,
And 'twixt his legs he ever claps his tail.
With him Despair now often coupled goes,
Which by his roaring mouth each huntsman knows,
None hath a better mind unto the game,
But he gives off, and always seemeth lame.
My bloodhound Cruelty, as swift as wind,
Hunts to the death, and never comes behind ;

Who, but she's strapt, and muzzled too, withal,
Would eat her fellows, and the prey and all ;
And yet, she cares not much for any food,
Unless it be the purest harmless blood.

All these are kept abroad at charge of many :
'They do not cost me in a year a penny.
But there's two couple, of a middling size,
'That seldom pass the sight of my own eyes ;
Hope, on whose head I've laid my life to pawn ;
Compassion, that on every one will fawn.
'This would, when 'twas a whelp, with rabbits
play,
Or lambs, and let them go unhurt away ;
Nay, now she is of growth, she'll now and then
Catch you a hare and let her go again.
'The two last, Joy and Sorrow, make me wonder,
For they can ne'er agree, nor 'bide asunder.
Joy's ever wanton, and no order knows :
She'll run at larks, or stand and bark at crows.
Sorrow goes by her, and ne'er moves his eye,
Yet both do serve to help make up the cry.
'Then comes, behind all these, to bear the bass,
'Two couple more of a far larger race,
Such wide-mouthed trollops, that 'twould do you
good
'To hear their loud-loud echoes tear the wood :
'There's Vanity, who by her gaudy hide
May far away from all the rest be 'spied ;
'Though huge, yet quick ; for she's now here, now
there,
Nay, look about you, and she's everywhere,
Yet ever with the rest, and still in chace.
Right so, Inconstancy fills every place,
And yet so strange a fickle-natured hound,
Look for her, and she's nowhere to be found.
Weakness is no fair dog unto the eye,
And yet she hath her proper quality.
But there's Presumption, when he heat hath got,
He drowns the thunder and the cannon-shot ;
And when at start he his full roaring makes,
'The earth doth tremble and the heaven shakes.

'These were my dogs, ten couple just in all,
Whom by the name of Satires I do call :
Mad curs they be, and I can ne'er come nigh them,
But I'm in danger to be bitten by them.
Much pains I took, and spent days not a few,
'To make them keep together and hunt true ;
Which yet I do suppose had never been,
But that I had a Scourge to keep them in.
Now, when that I this kennel first had got,
Out of mine own demesnes I hunted not,
Save on these downs, or among yonder rocks,
After those beasts that spoiled our parish flocks ;
Nor during that time was I ever wont
With all my kennel in one day to hunt ;
Nor had done yet, but that this other year,
Some beasts of prey that haunt the deserts here,
Did, not alone, for many nights together,
Devour, sometime a lamb, sometime a wether,
And so disquiet many a poor man's herd,
But thereof losing all were much afeared.
Yea, I among the rest did fare as bad,
Or rather worse ; for the best ewes I had,
Whose breed should be my means of life and gain,
Were in one evening by these monsters slain ;
Which mischief I resolvéd to repay,
Or else grow desp'rate and hunt all away.
For in a fury, such as you shall see
Huntsmen in missing of their sport will be,
I vowed a monster should not lurk about
In all this province, but I'd find him out ;
And thereupon, without respect or care
How lame, how full, or how unfit they were,
In haste unkennelled all my roaring crew,
Who were as mad as if my mind they knew ;
And ere they trailed a flight-shot, the fierce curs
Had roused a hart, and through brakes, briars, and
furze
Followed at gaze so close, that Love and Fear
Got in together, and had surely there
Quite overthrown him, but that Hope thrust in
'Twixt both, and saved the pinching of his skin ;

Whereby he 'scaped, till coursing overthwart,
 Despair came in, and griped him to the heart.
 I hallooed in the res'due to the fall,
 And for an entrance, there I fleshed them all ;
 Which having done, I dipped my staff in blood,
 And onward led my Thunder to the wood ;
 Where what they did, I'll tell you out anon :
 My keeper calls me, and I must be gone.
 Go, if you please, awhile attend your flocks,
 And when the sun is over yonder rocks,
 Come to this cave again, where I will be,
 If that my guardian so much favour me.

Yet, if you please, let us three sing a strain,
 Before you turn your sheep into the plain.

Willy.

I am content.

Cuddy.

As well content am I.

Philarete.

Then Will, begin ! and we'll the rest supply.

Song.

Willy.

SHEPHERD ! would these gates were ope,
 Thou might'st take with us thy fortunes.

Philarete.

No ; I'll make this narrow scope,
 (Since my fate doth so importune),
 Means unto a wider hope.

Cuddy.

Would thy shepherdess were here,
 Who belovéd, loves so dearly !

Philarete.

Not for both your flocks, I swear,
And the grain they yield you yearly,
Would I so much wrong my dear.

Yet, to me, nor to this place,
Would she now be long a stranger.
She would hold it no disgrace
(If she feared not more my danger),
Where I am, to show her face.

Willy.

Shepherd, we would wish no harms,
But some thing that might content thee.

Philarete.

Wish me, then, within her arms ;
And that wish will ne'er repent me,
If your wishes might prove charms.

Willy.

Be thy prison her embrace,
Be thy air her sweetest breathing.

Cuddy.

Be thy prospect her sweet face,
For each look a kiss bequeathing,
And appoint thyself the place.

Philarete.

Nay, pray hold there, for I should scanty then
Come meet you here this afternoon again.
But fare you well ! since wishes have no power,
Let us depart and keep the appointed hour.

THE THIRD ECLÔQUE.

THE ARGUMENT.

*Philarete, with his three friends,
Here his hunting story ends.
King Alexis, with much ruth,
Wails the banished shepherd's youth ;
But he slighteth Fortune's stings,
And in spite of thralldom sings.*

PHILARETE, CUDDY, ALEXIS, WILLY.

Philarete.

So, now I see y'are shepherds of your word :
'Thus were you wont to promise, and to do.

Cuddy.

More than our promise is, we can afford :
We come ourselves, and bring another, too—
Alexis, whom thou know'st well is no foe ;
Who loves thee much ; and I do know that he
Would fain a hearer of thy Hunting be.

Philarete.

Alexis ! you are welcome ; for you know
You cannot be but welcome where I am :
You ever were a friend of mine in show,
And I have found you are indeed the same :
Upon my first restraint you hither came,
And proffered me more tokens of your love
Than it were fit my small deserts should prove.

Alexis.

"Tis still your use to underprize your merit.
Be not so coy to take my proffered love :
'Twill neither unbecome your worth nor spirit.
To offer court'sy doth thy friend behove ;
And which are so, this is a place to prove.
Then once again I say, if cause there be,
First make a trial, if thou please, of me.

Philarete.

Thanks, good Alexis, sit down by me here ;
I have a task, these shepherds know, to do ;
A tale already told this morn well near,
With which I very fain would forward go,
And am as willing thou should'st hear it too ;
But thou canst never understand this last,
Till I have also told thee what is past.

Willy.

It shall not need, for I so much presumed
I on your mutual friendships might be bold,
That I a freedom to myself assumed,
To make him know what is already told.
If I have done amiss then you may scold.
But in my telling I prevised this ;
He knew not whose, nor to what end it is.

Philarete.

Well, now he may ; for here my tale goes on.
My eager dogs and I to wood are gone ;
Where, beating through the coverts, every hound
A several game had in a moment found.
I rated them ; but they pursued their prey,
And as it fell, by hap, took all one way.
Then I began with quicker speed to follow,
And teased them on with a more cheerful halloo ;
That soon we passéd many weary miles,
Tracing the subtle game through all their wiles.

These doubled, those re-doubled on the scent,
Still keeping in full chase where'er they went,
Up hills, down cliffs, through bogs, and over
 plains,

Stretching their music to the highest strains ;

That when some thicket hid them from mine eye,
My ear was ravished with their melody.

Nor crossed we only ditches, hedges, furrows,
But hamlets, tithings, parishes, and boroughs :

They followed wheresoe'er the game did go,
Through kitchen, parlour, hall, and chamber too ;
And as they passed the city and the court,
My prince looked out, and deigned to view my
 sport ;

Which then, although I suffer for it now,

If some say true, he liking did allow ;

And so much, had I had but the wit to stay,

I might myself perhaps have heard him say.

But I, that time, as much as any daring,

More for my pleasure than my safety caring,

Seeing fresh game from every covert rise,

Crossing by thousands still before their eyes,

After I rushed, and following close my hounds,

Some beasts I found lie dead, some full of wounds,

Among the willows scarce with strength to move.

One I found here, another there, whom Love

Had griped to death : and, in the self same state,

Lay one devoured by Envy, one by Hate.

Lust had bit some, but I soon passed beside them ;

Their festered wounds so stunk, none could abide
 them.

Choler hurt divers, but Revenge killed more

Fear frightened all behind him and before.

Despair drove on a huge and mighty heap,

Forcing some down from rocks and hills to leap,

Some into water, some into the fire,

So on themselves he made them wreak his ire.

But I remember, as I passed that way,

Where the great King and Prince of Shepherds lay,

About the walls were hid some, once more known.

That my fell cur Ambition had o'erthrown,

Many I heard, pursued by Pity cry,
And oft I saw my bloodhound, Cruelty,
Eating her passage even to the heart,
Whither once gotten she is loath to part.
All plied it well, and made so loud a cry,
'Twas heard beyond the shores of Brittany.
Some rated them, some stormed, some liked the
game,
Some thought me worthy praise, some worthy
blame ;
But I, not fearing the one, mis-'steeming the
other,
Both in shrill halloos and loud yearnings smother.
Yea, the strong-mettled, and my long-breathed
crew,
Seeing the game increasing in their view,
Grew the more frolic, and the course's length
Gave better breath, and added to their strength.
Which Jove perceiving, for Jove heard their cries
Rumbling amongst the spheres' concavities,
He marked their course and courages increase,
Saying, "'Twere pity such a chase should cease ;"
And therewith swore their mouths should never
waste,
But hunt as long's mortality did last.
Soon did they feel the power of his great gift,
And I began to find their pace more swift.
I followed, and I rated, but in vain
Strived to o'ertake or take them up again :
They never stayéd since, nor nights nor days,
But to and fro still run a thousand ways ;
Yea, often to this place where now I lie,
They'll wheel about to cheer me with their cry ;
And one day in good time will vengeance take
On some offenders for their master's sake.
For know, my friends, my freedom in this sort
For them I lose, and making myself sport.

Willy.

Why, was there any harm at all in this ?

Philarete.

No, Willy ; and I hope yet none there is.

Willy.

How comes it, then ?

Philarete.

Note, and I'll tell thee how !

Thou knowest that Truth and Innocency now,
If placed with meanness, suffer more despite
Than Villainies accompanied with might.
But thus it fell : While that my hounds pursued
Their noisome prey, and every field lay strewed
With monsters, hurt and slain, upon a beast,
More subtle and more noisome than the rest,
My lean-flanked bitch, called Envy, happed to
light,

And, as her wont is, did so surely bite,
That though she left behind small outward smart,
The wounds were deep, and rankled to the heart.
This, joining to some other that of late
Were very eagerly pursued by Hate,
To fit their purpose, having taken leisure,
Did thus conspire to work me a displeasure.
For imitation, far surpassing apes,
They laid aside their fox and wolfish shapes,
And shrouded in the skins of harmless sheep,
Into byeways and open paths did creep ;
Where they, as hardly drawing breath, did lie,
Showing their wounds to every passer-by,
To make them think that they were sheep so foiled,
And by my dogs in their late hunting spoiled.
Beside, some other that envied my game,
And for their pastime kept such monsters tame,
As you do know there's many for their pleasure
Keep foxes, bears, and wolves, as some great
treasure ;

Yea, many get their living by them too,
And so did store of these I speak of do ;

Who, seeing that my kennel had affrighted
Or hurt some vermin wherein they delighted,
And finding their own power by much too weak
Their malice on my innocence to wreak,
Sworn with the deepest rancour of despite,
Some of our greatest shepherds' folds by night
'They closely entered ; and there having stained
Their hands in villainy, of me they 'plained,
Affirming, without shame or honesty,
I and my dogs had done it purposely.
Whereat they stormed, and called me to a trial,
Where innocence prevails not, nor denial.
But for that cause, here in this place I lie,
Where none so merry as my dogs and I.

Cuddy.

Believe it, here's a tale will suiten well
For shepherds in another age to tell.

Willy.

And thou shalt be remembered with delight,
By this, hereafter, many a winter's night ;
For of this sport another age will ring ;
Yea, nymphs that are unborn thereof shall sing ;
And not a beauty on our greens shall play,
That hath not heard of this thy hunting-day.

Philarete.

It may be so ; for if that gentle swain,
Who once by Tavy, on the western plain,
Would make the song, such life his verse can give,
Then I do know my name might ever live.

Alexis.

But tell me ; are our plains and nymphs forgot,
And canst thou frolic in thy trouble be ?

Philarete.

Can I, Alexis ! sayest thou ? Can I not,
That am resolved to scorn more misery ?

Alexis.

Oh, but that youth's yet green, and young blood hot ;
 And liberty must needs be sweet to thee ;
 But now most sweet, whilst every bushy vale,
 And grove, and hill, rings of the nightingale.

Methinks, when thou rememberest those sweet lays
 Which thou wouldst lead thy shepherdess to hear,
 Each evening-tide among the leafy sprays,
 The thought of that should make thy freedom dear ;
 For now, whilst every nymph on holidays
 Sports with some jolly lad, and maketh cheer,
 Thine sighs for thee, and mewed up from resort,
 Will neither play herself, nor see their sport.

Those shepherds that were many a morning wont
 Unto their boys to leave the tender herd,
 And bear thee company when thou didst hunt ;
 Methinks the sport thou hast so gladly shared
 Among those swains should make thee think upon't ;
 For 't seems all vain, now, that was once endeared.
 It cannot be, since I could make relation
 How for less cause thou hast been deep in passion.

Philarete.

'Tis true, my tender heart was ever yet
 Too capable of such conceits as these :
 I never saw that object but from it
 The passions of my love I could increase.
 Those things which move not other men a whit,
 I can and do make use of, if I please :
 When I am sad, to sadness I apply
 Each bird, and tree, and flower that I pass by.

So, when I will be merry, I as well
 Something for mirth from everything can draw,
 From misery, from prisons, nay, from hell ;
 And as when to my mind grief gives a flaw,
 Best comforts do but make my woes more fell :
 So when I'm bent to mirth, from Mischief's paw

(Though seized upon me) I would something
cull,
That, spite of care, should make my joys more full.

I feel those wants, Alexis, thou dost name,
Which spite of youth's affections I sustain ;
Or else, for what is't I have gotten fame,
And am more known than many an elder swain,
If such desires I had not learned to tame,
Since many pipe much better on this plain?
But tune your reeds, and I will in a song
Express my care, and how I take this wrong.

Sonnet.

I THAT erst-while the world's sweet air did draw,
Graced by the fairest ever mortal saw ;
Now closely pent with walls of ruthless stone,
Consume my days and nights, and all alone.

When I was wont to sing of shepherds' loves,
My walks were fields and downs, and hills and
groves ;
But now, alas ! so strict is my hard doom,
Fields, downs, hills, groves and all's but one poor
room.

Each morn, as soon as daylight did appear,
With nature's music birds would charm mine ear ;
Which now, instead of their melodious strains,
Hearsrattling shackles, gyves, and bolts, and chains.

But, though that all the world's delight forsake me,
I have a Muse, and she shall music make me ;
Whose airy notes, in spite of closest cages,
Shall give content to me and after-ages.

Nor do I pass for all this outward ill,
My heart's the same, and undejected still ;
And, which is more than some in freedom win,
I have true rest, and peace, and joy within.

And then my mind, that spite of prison's free,
 Whene'er she pleases, anywhere can be :
 She's in an hour in France, Rome, Turkey, Spain ;
 In earth, in hell, in heaven, and here again.

Yet there's another comfort in my woe :
 My cause is spread, and all the world may know
 My fault's no more but speaking truth and reason ;
 No debt, nor theft, nor murder, rape, nor treason.

Nor shall my foes, with all their might and power,
 Wipe out their shame, nor yet this fame of our ;
 Which when they find, they shall my fate envŷ,
 'Till they grow lean, and sick, and mad, and die.

Then, though my body here in prison rot,
 And my wrong'd *Satires* seem awhile forgot ;
 Yet when both fame and life hath left those men,
 My verse and I'll revive, and live again.

So thus enclosed, I bear Affliction's load,
 But with more true content than some abroad ;
 For whilst their thoughts do feel my Scourge's sting,
 In bonds I'll leap, and dance, and laugh, and sing.

Alexis.

Why now I see thou droop'st not with thy care,
 Neither exclaim'st thou on thy hunting-day ;
 But dost, with unchanged resolution, bear
 The heavy burthen of exile away.
 All that did truly know thee, did conceive
 Thy actions with thy spirit still agreed :
 Their good conceit thou dost no whit bereave,
 But showest that thou'rt still thyself indeed.

If that thy mind to baseness now descends,
 Thou'lt injure Virtue, and deceive thy friends

Willy.

Alexis, he will injure Virtue much,
 But more his friends, and most of all himself,
 If on that common bar his mind but touch,
 It wrecks his fame upon disgrace's shelf ;

Whereas, if thou steer on that happy course,
Which in thy just adventure is begun,
No thwarting tide nor adverse blast shall force
Thy bark without the channel's bounds to run.
Thou art the same thou wert, for aught I see,
When thou didst freely on the mountains hunt :
In nothing changéd yet, unless it be
More merrily disposed than thou wert wont.
Still keep thee thus, so others well shall know,
Virtue can give content in midst of woe ;
And see, though mightiness with frowns doth threat,
That, to be innocent, is to be great.
Thrive and farewell !

Alexis.

In this thy trouble flourish.

Cuddy.

While those that wish thee ill, fret, pine, and perish.

THE FOURTH ECLOGUE.

THE ARGUMENT.

*Philarete on Willy calls
To sing out his pastorals ;
Warrants fame shall grace his rhymes,
'Spite of envy and the times ;
And shows how in care he uses
To take comfort from his Muses.*

PHILARETE. WILLY.

Philarete.

PRITHEE, Willy ! tell me this ;
What new accident there is,
That thou, once the blithest lad,
Art become so wond'rous sad,

And so careless of thy quill
As if thou hadst lost thy skill?
Thou wert wont to charm thy flocks,
And among the massy rocks
Hast so cheered me with thy song
That I have forgot my wrong.
Something hath thee surely crost,
That thy old wont thou hast lost.
Tell me, have I aught missaid,
That hath made thee ill-apaid?
Hath some churl done thee a spite?
Dost thou miss a lamb to-night?
Frowns thy fairest shepherd's lass?
Or how comes this ill to pass?
Is there any discontent
Worse than this my banishment?

Willy.

Why, doth that so evil seem
That thou nothing worse dost deem?
Shepherds there full many be,
That will change contents with thee.
Those that choose their walks at will,
On the valley or the hill,
Or those pleasures boast of can,
Groves or fields may yield to man,
Never come to know the rest
Wherewithal thy mind is blest?
Many a one that oft resorts
To make up the troop at sports,
And in company some while,
Happens to strain forth a smile,
Feels more want and outward smart,
And more inward grief of heart
Than this place can bring to thee,
While thy mind remaineth free.
Thou bewail'st my want of mirth,
But what find'st thou in this earth
Wherein aught may be believed
Worth to make me joyed or grieved?

And yet feel I, natheless,
Part of both I must confess.
Sometime I of mirth do borrow,
Otherwhile as much of sorrow ;
But my present state is such,
As nor joy nor grieve I much.

Philarete.

Why hath Willy then so long
Thus forborne his wonted song ?
Wherefore doth he now let fall
His well-tuned pastoral,
And my ears that music bar
Which I more long after far
Than the liberty I want ?

Willy.

That were very much to grant.
But doth this hold alway, lad !
Those that sing not, must be sad ?
Didst thou ever that bird hear
Sing well that sings all the year ?
Tom the Piper doth not play
Till he wears his pipe away :
There's a time to slack the string,
And a time to leave to sing.

Philarete.

Yea ; but no man now is still
That can sing or tune a quill.
Now to chaunt it were but reason :
Song and music are in season.
Now, in this sweet, jolly tide,
Is the Earth in all her pride :
The fair lady of the May,
Trimmed up in her best array,
Hath invited all the swains,
With the lasses of the plains,
To attend upon her sport
At the places of resort.

Corydon, with his bold rout,
Hath already been about
For the elder shepherds' dole,
And fetched in the summer-pole ;
Whilst the rest have built a bower
To defend them from a shower,
Ceiled so close, with boughs all green,
Titan cannot pry between.
Now the dairy wenches dream
Of their strawberries and cream,
And each doth herself advance
To be taken in to dance ;
Every one that knows to sing,
Fits him for his carolling ;
So do those that hope for meed,
Either by the pipe or reed ;
And though I am kept away,
I do hear, this very day,
Many learned grooms do wend
For the garlands to contend
Which a nymph, that hight Desert,
Long a stranger in this part,
With her own fair hand hath wrought ;
A rare work, they say, past thought,
As appeareth by the name,
For she calls them Wreaths of Fame.
She hath set in their due place
Every flower that may grace ;
And among a thousand moe,
Whereof some but serve for show,
She hath wove in Daphne's tree,
That they may not blasted be ;
Which with Time she edged about,
Lest the work should ravel out.
And that it might wither never,
Intermixed it with Live-ever.
These are to be shared among
Those who do excel for song,
Or their passions can rehearse
In the smooth'st and sweetest verse.
Then, for those among the rest

That can play and pipe the best,
There's a kidling with the dam,
A fat wether and a lamb.
And for those that leopen far,
Wrestle, run, and throw the bar,
There's appointed guerdons too :
He that best the first can do,
Shall for his reward be paid
With a sheep-hook, fair inlaid
With fine bone of a strange beast
That men bring out of the West.
For the next, a scrip of red,
Tasselled with fine-coloured thread.
There's prepared for their meed
That in running make most speed,
Or the cunning measures foot,
Cups of turned maple-root,
Whereupon the skilful man
Hath engraved the loves of Pan ;
And the last hath for his due
A fine napkin wrought with blue.
Then, my Willy, why art thou
Careless of thy merit now ?
What dost thou here, with a wight
That is shut up from delight
In a solitary den,
As not fit to live with men ?
Go, my Willy, get thee gone,
Leave me in exile alone.
Hie thee to that merry throng,
And amaze them with thy song.
Thou art young, yet such a lay
Never graced the month of May,
As, if they provoke thy skill,
Thou canst fit unto thy quill.
I with wonder heard thee sing
At our last year's revelling.
Then I with the rest was free,
When, unknown, I noted thee,
And perceived the ruder swains,
Envy thy far sweeter strains.

Yea, I saw the lasses cling
Round about thee in a ring,
As if each one jealous were
Any but herself should hear ;
And I know they yet do long
For the res'due of thy song.
Haste thee, then, to sing it forth.
Take the benefit of worth ;
And desert will sure bequeath
Fame's fair garland for thy wreath.
Hie thee, Willy, hie away !

Willy.

Phila ! rather let me stay
And be desolate with thee,
Than at those their revels be.
Nought such is my skill, Iwis,
As indeed thou deem'st it is ;
But whate'er it be, I must
Be content, and shall, I trust.
For a song I do not pass
'Mongst my friends ; but what, alas !
Should I have to do with them
That my music do contemn ?
Some there are, as well I wot,
That the same yet favour not ;
Yet I cannot well avow,
They my carols disallow ;
But such malice I have spied,
'Tis as much as if they did.

Philarete.

Willy, what may those men be,
Are so ill to malice thee ?

Willy.

Some are worthy-well esteemed ;
Some without worth are so deemed ;
Others of so base a spirit,
They have nor esteem nor merit.

Philarete.

What's the wrong?

Willy.

A slight offence,
Wherewithal I can dispense ;
But hereafter, for their sake,
To myself I'll music make.

Philarete.

What, because some clown offends,
Wilt thou punish all thy friends?

Willy.

Do not, Phil, misunderstand me :
Those that love me may command me ;
But thou know'st I am but young,
And the pastoral I sung
Is by some supposed to be,
By a strain, too high for me ;
So they kindly let me gain
Not my labour for my pain.
Trust me, I do wonder why
They should me my own deny.
Though I'm young, I scorn to flit
On the wings of borrowed wit.
I'll make my own feathers rear me
Whither others cannot bear me.
Yet I'll keep my skill in store,
Till I've seen some winters more.

Philarete.

But in earnest mean'st thou so ?
Then thou art not wise, I trow :
Better shall advise thee, Pan,
For thou dost not rightly than :
That's the ready way to blot
All the credit thou hast got.

Rather in thy age's prime
Get another start of Time ;
And make those that so fond be,
Spite of their own dulness, see
That the sacred Muses can
Make a child in-years a man.
It is known what thou canst do ;
For it is not long ago,
When that, Cuddy, thou, and I,
Each the other's skill to try,
At Saint Dunstan's charmed well,*
As some present there can tell,
Sang upon a sudden theme,
Sitting by the crinison stream ;
Where, if thou didst well or no,
Yet remains the song to show.
Much experience more I've had,
Of thy skill, thou happy lad !
And would make the world to know it,
But that time will further show it.
Envy makes their tongues now run,
More than doubt of what is done ;
For that needs must be thy own,
Or to be some other's known ;
But how then will 't suit unto
What thou shalt hereafter do ?
Or I wonder, where is he
Would with that song part to thee.
Nay, were there so mad a swain,
Could such glory sell for gain,
Phœbus would not have combined
That gift with so base a mind.
Never did the Nine impart
The sweet secrets of their art
Unto any that did scorn
We should see their favours worn.
'Therefore unto those that say,
Where they pleased to sing a lay

* The Devil's Tavern in Fleet Street, where Ben Jonson met his fellow poets.

They could do't and will not though,
This I speak, for this I know,
None e'er drank the Thespian spring
And knew how, but he did sing.
For, that once infused in man,
Makes him show't, do what he can ;
Nay, those that do only sip,
Or but even their fingers dip
In that sacred fount, poor elves !
Of that brood will show themselves.
Yea, in hope to get them fame,
'They will speak, though to their shame.
Let those, then, at thee repine
That by their wits measure thine :
Needs those songs must be thine own,
And that one day will be known.
That poor imputation too,
I myself do undergo ;
But it will appear, ere long,
That 'twas Envy sought our wrong ;
Who, at twice ten, have sung more
Than some will do at fourscore.
Cheer thee, honest Willy, then,
And begin thy song again.

Willy.

Fain I would, but I do fear,
When again my lines they hear,
If they yield they are my rhymes
They will feign some other crimes ;
And 'tis no safe vent'ring by,
Where we see Detraction lie ;
For, do what I can, I doubt
She will pick some quarrel out ;
And I oft have heard defended,
Little said is soon amended.

Philarete.

Seest thou not, in clearest days,
Oft thick fogs cloud Heaven's rays ?

And that vapours which do breathe
From the Earth's gross womb beneath,
Seem unto us with black steams
To pollute the Sun's bright beams,
And yet vanish into air,
Leaving it unblemished fair?
So, my Willy, shall it be
With Detraction's breath on thee :
It shall never rise so high
As to stain thy poesy.
As that sun doth oft exhale
Vapours from each rotten vale,
Poesy so sometime drains
Gross conceits from muddy brains ;
Mists of envy, fogs of spite,
'Twixt men's judgments and her light ;
But so much her power may do,
That she can dissolve them too.
If thy verse do bravely tower,
As she makes wing she gets power ;
Yet the higher she doth soar,
She's affronted still the more,
Till she to the highest hath past ;
Then she rests with Fame at last.
Let nought, therefore, thee affright ;
But make forward in thy flight.
For if I could match thy rhyme,
To the very stars I'd climb ;
There begin again, and fly
Till I reached eternity.
But, alas, my Muse is slow,
For thy place she flags too low ;
Yea, the more's her hapless fate,
Her short wings were clipt of late ;
And poor I, her fortune ruing,
Am put up myself a mewling.
But if I my cage can rid,
I'll fly where I never did ;
And though for her sake I'm crost,
Though my best hopes I have lost,
And knew she would make my trouble

Ten times more than ten times double,
I should love and keep her too,
Spite of all the world could do.
For though, banished from my flocks
And confined within these rocks,
Here I waste away the light
And consume the sullen night,
She doth for my comfort stay,
And keeps many cares away.
Though I miss the flowery fields,
With those sweets the spring-tide yields ;
Though I may not see those groves,
Where the shepherds chaunt their loves,
And the lasses more excel
Than the sweet-voiced Philomel ;
Though of all those pleasures past,
Nothing now remains at last
But Remembrance—poor relief !
That more makes than mends my grief :
She's my mind's companion still,
Maugre envy's evil will ;
Whence she should be driven too,
Were't in mortal's power to do.
She doth tell me where to borrow
Comfort in the midst of sorrow,
Makes the desolatest place
To her presence be a grace,
And the blackest discontents
To be pleasing ornaments.
In my former days of bliss
Her divine skill taught me this,
That from everything I saw
I could some invention draw,
And raise pleasure to her height
Through the meanest object's sight ;
By the murmur of a spring,
Or the least bough's rustling ;
By a daisy, whose leaves spread,
Shut when Titan goes to bed ;
Or a shady bush or tree ;
She could more infuse in me,

Than all Nature's beauties can
In some other wiser man.
By her help I also now
Make this churlish place allow
Some things that may sweeten gladness
In the very gall of sadness :
The dull loneness, the black shade
That these hanging vaults have made ;
The strange music of the waves
Beating on these hollow caves ;
This black den which rocks emboss
Overgrown with eldest moss ;
The rude portals that give light
More to terror than delight ;
This my chamber of neglect,
Walled about with disrespect ;
From all these, and this dull air,
A fit object for despair,
She hath taught me, by her might,
To draw comfort and delight.
Therefore, thou best earthly bliss,
I will cherish thee for this.
Poesy, thou sweet'st content
That e'er Heaven to mortals lent !
Though they as a trifle leave thee
Whose dull thoughts cannot conceive thee,
Though thou be to them a scorn
That to nought but earth are born,
Let my life no longer be
Than I am in love with thee.
Though our wise ones call thee madness,
Let me never taste of gladness,
If I love not thy maddest fits
More than all their greatest wits.
And though some, too seeming holy,
Do account thy raptures folly,
Thou dost teach me to condemn
What makes knaves and fools of them.
O high power ! that oft doth carry
Men above—

Willy.

Good Philarete ! tarry :
I do fear thou wilt be gone
Quite above my reach, anon.
The kind flames of poesy
Have now borne thy thoughts so high,
That they up in Heaven be,
And have quite forgotten me.
Call thyself to mind again.
Are these raptures for a swain
That attends on lowly sheep,
And with simple herds doth keep ?

Philarete.

Thanks, my Willy ! I had run
Till that time had lodged the sun,
If thou hadst not made me stay ;
But thy pardon here I pray.
Loved Apollo's sacred sire
Had raised up my spirits higher
Through the love of poesy,
Than indeed they use to fly.
But as I said, I say still ;
If that I had Willy's skill,
Envy nor Detraction's tongue
Should e'er make me leave my song ;
But I'd sing it every day,
Till they pined themselves away.
Be thou then advised in this,
Which both just and fitting is :
Finish what thou hast begun,
Or at least still forward run.
Hail and thunder ill he'll bear,
That a blast of wind doth fear ;
And if words will thus affray thee,
Prithee how will deeds dismay thee ?
Do not think so rathe a song
Can pass through the vulgar throng,
And escape without a touch,
Or that they can hurt it much :

Frosts we see do nip that thing
 Which is forward'st in the spring ;
 Yet at last, for all such lets,
 Somewhat of the rest it gets ;
 And I'm sure that so may'st thou.
 Therefore, my kind Willy, now,
 Since thy folding-time draws on,
 And I see thou must be gone,
 Thee I earnestly beseech
 To remember this my speech,
 And some little counsel take,
 For Philareté his sake ;
 And I more of this will say
 If thou come next holiday.

THE FIFTH ECLOGUE.

THE ARGUMENT.

*Philarete Alexis moves
 To embrace the Muse's loves ;
 Bids him, never careful seem
 Of another's disesteem ;
 Since to them it may suffice,
 They themselves can justly prize.*

PHILARETE. ALEXIS.

Philarete.

ALEXIS, if thy worth do not disdain
 The humble friendship of a meaner swain,
 Or some more needful business of the day
 Urge thee to be too hasty on thy way ;
 Come, gentle shepherd, rest thee here by me,
 Beneath the shadow of this broad-leaved tree ;
 For though I seem a stranger, yet mine eye
 Observes in thee the marks of courtesy ;

And if my judgment err not, noted too
More than in those that more would seem to do.
Such virtues thy rare modesty doth hide,
Which by their proper lustre I espied ;
And though long masked in silence they have been,
I have a wisdom through that silence seen ;
Yea, I have learned knowledge from thy tongue,
And heard when thou hast in concealment sung ;
Which me the bolder and more willing made
Thus to invite thee to this homely shade.
And though, it may be, thou couldst never spy
Such worth in me I might be known thereby ;
In thee I do ; for here my neighbouring sheep
Upon the border of these downs I keep ;
Where often thou at pastorals and plays
Hast graced our wakes on summer-holidays ;
And many a time with thee at this cold spring
Met I, to hear your learned shepherds sing,
Saw them disporting in the shady groves,
And in chaste sonnets woo their chaster loves ;
When I, endued with the meanest skill,
'Mongst others have been urged to use my quill ;
But, 'cause but little cunning I had got,
Perhaps thou saw'st me, though thou knew'st me
not.

Alexis.

Yes, Philarete ! I know thee, and thy name ;
Nor is my knowledge grounded all on Fame.
Art thou not he, that but this other year
Scaredst all the wolves and foxes in this shire,
And in a match at football lately tried,
Having scarce twenty Satyrs on thy side,
Held'st play, and though assailed kept'st thy stand
'Gainst all the best tried ruffians in the land ?
Didst thou not then in doleful Sonnets moan,
When the beloved of great Pan was gone,
And at the wedding of fair Thame and Rhine,*

* Alluding to his Epithalamia on the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth to the Elector Palatine.

Sing of their glories to thy Valentine?
I know it, and I must confess that long,
In one thing I did to thy nature wrong;
For, till I marked the aim thy Satires had,
I thought them over-bold, and thee half mad.
But, since I did more nearly on thee look,
I soon perceived that I had all mistook:
I saw, that of a cynic thou mad'st show,
Where since I find, that thou wert nothing so;
And that of many thou much blame hadst got,
Whenas thy innocence deserved it not.
But that too good opinion thou hast seemed
To have of me, not so to be esteemed,
Prevails not aught to stay him who doth fear
He rather should reproofs than praises hear.
'Tis true, I found thee plain and honest too,
Which made me like, then love, as now I do;
And, though a stranger, this to thee I'll say,
Where I do love, I am not coy to stay.

: . *Philarete.*

Thanks, gentle swain, that dost so soon unfold,
What I to thee as gladly would have told,
And thus thy wonted courtesy exprest
In kindly entertaining this request!
Sure, I should injure much my own content,
Or wrong thy love, to stand on compliment,
Who hast acquaintance in one word begun
As well as I could in an age have done;
Or by an overweening slowness mar
What thy more wisdom hath brought on so far.
Then sit thou down, and I'll my mind declare,
As freely as if we familiars were;
And if thou wilt but deign to give me ear,
Something thou may'st for thy more profit hear.

. . *Alexis.*

Philareté! I willingly obey.

Philarete.

Then know, Alexis ! from that very day
Whenas I saw thee at thy shepherd's cote,
Where each, I think, of other took first note ;
I mean that pastor, who by Tavy's springs
Chaste shepherds' loves in sweetest numbers sings,
And with his music, to his greater fame,
Hath late made proud the fairest nymphs of Thame ;
E'en then, methought, I did espy in thee
Some unperceived and hidden worth to be ;
Which in thy more apparent virtues shined ;
And, among many, I in thought divined,
By something my conceit had understood,
That thou wert marked one of the Muses' brood.
That made me love thee ; and that love I bear
Begot a pity, and that pity, care :
Pity I had to see good parts concealed,
Care I had how to have that good revealed ;
Since 'tis a fault admitteth no excuse
To possess much, and yet put nought in use.
Hereon I vowed, if we two ever met,
The first request that I would strive to get,
Should be but this, that thou wouldst show thy skill,
How thou couldst tune thy verses to thy quill,
And teach thy Muse in some well-framed song,
To show the art thou hast suppressed so long ;
Which if my new acquaintance may obtain,
I will for ever honour this day's gain.

Alexis.

Alas ! my small experience scarce can tell
So much as where those nymphs the Muses,
 dwell ;
Nor, though my slow conceit still travels on,
Shall I e'er reach to drink of Helicon,
Or, if I might so favoured be, to taste
What those sweet streams but overflow in waste,
And touch Parnassus where it low'st doth lie ;
I fear my skill would hardly fly so high.

Philarete.

Despair not, man ! the gods have prizéd nought
So dear, that may not be with labour bought ;
Nor need thy pain be great, since Fate and Heaven,
That, as a blessing, at thy birth have given.

Alexis.

Why, say they had ?

Philarete.

'Then use their gifts thou must,
Or be ungrateful, and so be unjust ;
For if it cannot truly be denied
Ingratitude men's benefits do hide,
'Then more ungrateful must he be, by odds,
Who doth conceal the bounty of the gods.

Alexis.

That's true indeed ; but Envy haunteth those
Who, seeking fame, their hidden skill disclose ;
Where else they might, obscured from her espying,
Escape the blasts and danger of envying.
Critics will censure our best strains of wit,
And purblind Ignorance misconstrue it ;
And, which is bad, yet worse than this doth follow,
Most hate the Muses and condemn Apollo.

Philarete.

So let them : why should we their hate esteem ?
Is't not enough we of ourselves can deem ?
'Tis more to their disgrace that we scorn them,
'Than unto us that they our art condemn.
Can we have better pastime than to see
Their gross heads may so much deceived be,
As to allow those doings best, where wholly
We scoff them to their face and flout their folly ?
Or to behold black Envy in her prime,
Die self-consumed whilst we vie lives with time,

And in despite of her, more fame attain
Than all her malice can wipe out again?

Alexis.

Yea ; but if I applied me to those strains,
Who should drive forth my flocks unto the plains,
Which, whilst the Muses rest and leisure crave,
Must watering, folding, and attendance have?
For if I leave with wonted care to cherish
Those tender herds, both I and they should perish.

Philarete.

Alexis, now I see thou dost mistake :
There is no meaning thou thy charge forsake ;
Nor would I wish thee so thyself abuse
As to neglect thy calling for thy Muse ;
But let these two so each of other borrow,
That they may season mirth and lessen sorrow.
Thy flock will help thy charges to defray,
Thy Muse to pass the long and tedious day ;
Or whilst thou tun'st sweet measures to thy reed,
Thy sheep, to listen, will more near thee feed ;
The wolves will shun them, birds above thee sing,
And lambkins dance about thee in a ring.
Nay, which is more ; in this thy low estate,
Thou in contentment shalt with monarchs mate :
For mighty Pan and Ceres to us grants
Our fields and flocks shall help our outward wants ;
The Muses teach us songs to put off cares,
Graced with as rare and sweet conceits as theirs ;
And we can think our lasses on the greens
As fair or fairer than the fairest queens ;
Or, what is more than most of them shall do,
We'll make their juster fames last longer too,
And have our lines by greatest Princes graced,
When both their name and memory's defaced.
Therefore, Alexis, though that some disdain
The heavenly music of the rural plain,
What is't to us if they, o'erseen, contemn
The dainties which were ne'er ordained for them?

And though that there be other-some envý
The praises due to sacred Poesy,
Let them disdain and fret till they are weary,
We in ourselves have that shall make us merry ;
Which he that wants, and had the power to know it,
Would give his life that he might die a poet.

Alexis.

A brave persuasion.

Philarete.

Here thou seest me pent
Within the jaws of strict imprisonment,
A forlorn shepherd, void of all the means
Whereon man's common hope in danger leans ;
Weak in myself, exposéd to the hate
Of those whose envies are insatiate ;
Shut from my friends, banished from all delights ;
Nay, worse, excluded from the sacred rites.
Here I do live, 'mongst outlaws marked for death,
As one unfit to draw the common breath ;
Where those who to be good did never know,
Are barréd from the means should make them so.
I suffer, 'cause I wished my country well ;
And what I more must bear, I cannot tell.
I'm sure they give my body little scope,
And would allow my mind as little hope :
I waste my means, which of itself is slender,
Consume my time, perhaps my fortunes hinder,
And many crosses have, which those that can
Conceive no wrong that hurts another man
Will not take note of ; though if half so much
Should light on them, or their own persons touch,
Some that themselves, I fear, most worthy think,
With all their helps would into baseness shrink.
But, spite of hate and all that spite can do,
I can be patient yet and merry too.
That slender Muse of mine, by which my name,
Though scarce deserved, hath gained a little fame,

Hath made me unto such a fortune born,
That all misfortunes I know how to scorn;
Yea, midst these bonds can slight the great'st
that be,
As much as their disdain mis'steems of me.
This cave, whose very presence some affrights,
I have oft made to echo forth delights;
And hope to turn, if any justice be,
Both shame and care on those that wished it me.
For while the world rank villainies affords,
I will not spare to paint them out in words,
Although I still should into troubles run.
I knew what man could act ere I begun;
And I'll fulfil what my Muse draws me to,
Maugre all jails and purgatories too;
For whilst she sets me honest tasks about,
Virtue, or she, I know, will bear me out;
And if, by Fate, the abuséd power of some,
Must in the world's eye leave me overcome,
They shall find one fort yet, so fenced, I trow,
It cannot fear a mortal's overthrow.
This hope and trust that great power did infuse,
That first inspired into my breast a Muse,
By whom I do and ever will condemn
All those ill haps, my foes' despite, and them.

Alexis.

Th'ast so well, young Philarete! played thy
part,
I am almost in love with that sweet art;
And if some power will but inspire my song,
Alexis will not be obscuréd long.

Philarete.

Enough, kind pastor! But oh, yonder see
Two honest shepherds walking hither, be
Cuddy and Willy, that so dearly love,
Who are repairing into yonder grove.
Let's follow them; for never braver swains
Made music to their flocks upon these plains.

They are more worthy, and can better tell
What rare contents do with a poet dwell.
Then, while our sheep the short sweet grass do shear,
And till the long shade of the hills appear,
We'll hear them sing ; for though the one be young,
Never was any that more sweetly sung.



*FROM WITHER'S HYMNS AND SONGS
OF THE CHURCH.*



The Ten Commandments.

(EXOD. xx.)

THE great Almighty spake, and thus said he :
I am the Lord thy God, and I alone
From cruel Egypt's thralldom set thee free ;
And other gods but me thou shalt have none.

Have mercy, Lord, and so our hearts incline,
That we may keep this blessed law of thine !

Thou shalt not make an image to adore
Of aught on earth, above it, or below ;
A carved work thou shalt not bow before,
Nor any worship on the same bestow :
For I, thy God, a jealous God am known,
And on their seed the fathers' sins correct,
Until the third and fourth descent be gone ;
But them I always love that me affect.

The name of God thou never shalt abuse,
By swearing or repeating it in vain ;
For him that doth his name profanely use,
The Lord will as a guilty one arraign.

To keep the Sabbath holy bear in mind :
Six days thine own affairs apply thou to ;
The seventh is God's own day, for rest assigned,
And thou no kind of work therein shalt do,

Thou, nor thy child, thy servants, nor thy beast,
Nor he that guest-wise with thee doth abide ;
For after six days' labour God did rest,
And therefore he that day hath sanctified.

See that unto thy parents thou do give
Such honour as the child by duty owes,
That thou a long and blessed life may live
Within the land the Lord thy God bestows.

Thou shalt be wary that thou no man slay.
Thou shalt from all adultery be clear.
Thou shalt not steal another's goods away,
Nor witness false against thy neighbour bear.

With what is thine remaining well apaid,
Thou shalt not covet what thy neighbour's is ;
His house, nor wife, his servant, man, nor maid,
His ox, nor ass, nor anything of his.

Thy mercy, Lord, thy mercy let us have,
And in our heart these laws of thine engrave !



The Lord's Prayer.

(MATT. vi. 7.)

OUR Father which in heaven art !
We sanctify thy name :
Thy kingdom come ; thy will be done
In heaven and earth the same :
Give us this day our daily bread ;
And us forgive thou so,
As we 'on them, that do offend,
Forgiveness do bestow ;
Into temptation lead us not ;
But us from evil free ;
For thine the kingdom, power, and praise,
Is and shall ever be.



The Apostles' Creed.

IN God the Father I believe,
Who made all creatures by his word ;
And true belief I likewise have
In Jesus Christ, his Son, our Lord ;
Who by the Holy Ghost conceived,
Was of the Virgin Mary born ;
Who meekly Pilate's wrongs received,
And crucified was with scorn ;

Who died, and in the grave hath lain ;
Who did the lowest pit descend ;
Who on the third day rose again,
And up to heaven did ascend ;
Who at his Father's right hand there,
Now thronéd sits, and thence shall come
To take his seat of judgment here,
And give both quick and dead their doom.

I in the Holy Ghost believe,
The holy Church Cathólic too ;
And that the saints communion have,
Undoubtedly believe I do.
I well assured am likewise
A pardon for my sins to gain,
And that my flesh from death shall rise,
And everlasting life obtain.

Christmas Day.

As on the night before this blessed morn
A troop of angels unto shepherds told,
Where, in a stable, he was poorly born,
Whom nor the earth nor heaven of heavens can
hold;

Through Bethlem rung
This news at their return,
Yea, angels sung,
That God with us was born ;
And they made mirth because we should not mourn.

CHORUS.

His love, therefore, O let us all confess,
And to the sons of men his work express !

This favour Christ vouchsafed for our sake :
To buy us thrones he in a manger lay ;
Our weakness took, that we his strength might
take,

And was disrobed that he might us array ;
Our flesh he wore,
Our sins to wear away ;
Our curse he bore,
That we escape it may ;
And wept for us, that we might sing for aye.

His love, therefore, O let us all confess,
And to the sons of men his works express !

Good Friday.

You that like heedless strangers pass along,
As if nought here concernéd you to-day,
Draw nigh and hear the saddest passion-song
That ever you did meet with in your way :
So sad a story ne'er was told before,
Nor shall there be the like for evermore.

The greatest king that ever wore a crown,
More than the basest vassal was abused ;
The truest lover that was ever known,
By them beloved was most unkindly used ;
And he, that lived from all transgressions clear,
Was plagued for all the sins that ever were.

Even they, in pity of whose fall he wept,
Wrought for his ruin, whilst he sought their good,
And watchéd for him when they should have slept,
That they might quench their malice in his blood ;
Yet when their bonds from him he could have
thrown,
To save their lives he deigned to lose his own.

Those in whose hearts compassion should have
been,
Insulted o'er his poor afflicted soul ;
And those that nothing ill in him had seen,
As guilty him accused of treason foul ;
Nay, him that never had one idle thought,
They for blaspheming unto judgment brought ;

Where, some to ask him vain demands begin,
And some to make a sport with him devise ;
Some at his answers and behaviour grin,
And some do spit their filth into his eyes ;
Some give him blows, some mock, and some
revile,
And he, good heart ! sits quiet all the while.

Oh, that where such a throng of men should be,
No heart was found so gentle to relent ;
And that so good and meek a lamb as he
Should be so used, and yet no tear be spent !
Sure, when once malice fills the heart of man,
Nor stone nor steel can be so hardened then.

For, after this, his clothes from him they stript,
And then, as if some slave this Lord had been,
With cruel rods and scourges him they whipt,
Till wounds were over all his body seen ;
In purple clad, and crownéd too with thorn,
They set him forth and honoured him in scorn.

And when they saw him in so sad a plight,
As might have made a flinty heart to bleed,
They not a whit recanted at the sight,
But in their hellish fury did proceed :
Away with him ! Away with him ! they said ;
And crucify him ! crucify him ! cried.

A cross of wood, that huge and heavy was,
Upon his bloody shoulders next they lay,
Which onward to his execution place
He carried, till he fainted in the way ;
And, when he thither weak and tired came,
To give him rest they nailed him to the same.

Oh, could we but the thousandth part relate
Of those afflictions, which they made him bear,
Our hearts with passion would dissolve thereat,
And we should sit and weep for ever here ;
Nor should we glad again hereafter be,
But that we hope in glory him to see.

For while upon the cross he pained hung,
And was with foul tormentings also grieved,
Far more than can be told by any tongue,
Or in the hearts of mortals be conceived,
Those, for whose sake he underwent such pain,
Rejoiced thereat, and held him in disdain.

One offered to him vinegar and gall,
A second did his pious works deride,
To dicing for his robes did others fall,
And many mocked him, when to God he cried ;
Yet he, as they his pain still more procured,
Still loud and for their good the more endured.

But though his matchless love immortal were,
It was a mortal body he had on,
That could no more than mortal bodies bear ;
Their malice therefore did prevail thereon ;
And lo ! their utmost fury having tried,
This Lamb of God gave up the ghost and died ;

Whose death though cruel unrelenting man
Could view without bewailing or affright,
The sun grew dark, the earth to quake began,
The temple veil did rend asunder quite ;
Yea, hardest rocks therewith in pieces brake,
And graves did open and the dead awake.

O therefore, let us all that present be,
This innocent with movéd souls embrace !
For this was our Redeemer, this was he,
Who thus for our unkindness uséd was :
Even he, the cursed Jews and Pilate slew,
Is he alone of whom all this is true.

Our sins of spite were part of those that day,
Whose cruel whips and thorns did make him smart ;
Our lusts were those, that tired him in the way,
Our want of love was that which pierced his heart ;
And still, when we forget or slight his pain,
We crucify and torture him again.

"Whether encaged or roaming at liberty, Wither never seems to have abated one jot of that free spirit which sets its mark upon his writings. . . . Skilled in the 'sweet uses of adversity,' he knew how to extract the precious jewel from the head of the toad without drawing any of the ugly venom along with it. The prison notes of Wither are finer than the wood notes of most of his poetical brethren. The description in the Fourth Eclogue of his 'Shepherd's Hunting' (which was composed during his imprisonment in the Marshalsea) of the power of the Muse to extract pleasure from common objects, has been oftener quoted, and is more known than any part of his writings. . . . The praises of poetry have been often sung in ancient and in modern times; strange powers have been ascribed to it of influence over animate and inanimate auditors; its force over fascinated crowds has been acknowledged; but before Wither, no one ever celebrated its power at home, the wealth and the strength which this divine gift confers upon its possessor. Fame, and that too after death, was all which hitherto the poets had promised themselves from this art. It seems to have been left to Wither to discover that poetry was a present possession, as well as a rich reversion, and that the Muse has a promise of both lives,—of this, and of that which was to come."—

CHARLES LAMB.

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